

DisabilityNOW

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Community care cuts bite harder

Thousands of disabled people stand to lose their community care services as more cash-strapped local authorities look to make savings.

Tad Kubisa, president of the Association of Directors of Social Services, has warned that some local authorities are already being forced to cut services, and most others will follow suit next year.

Although social services budgets overall rose by only seven per cent in the Budget (*DN January*), six per cent of it went to community care.

The increased community care grant is being targeted at people coming into the system, and the money will be absorbed by medium and high priority cases, said Mr Kubisa. This means

those already using the services, especially people who are "low priority", potentially numbering thousands, could lose out.

"You've got more people in the system as the population ages. The only way you can manage it is to tighten your eligibility criteria," said Mr Kubisa.

He warned that tightening belts could cause long-term problems. "Every director in the country is concerned, because if you do not provide preventative services for low-risk people, they become high risk."

The effects are already beginning to show in some areas.

Teresa and Robert Jones, from Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire say they were given five days notice that their home care was to be stopped.

They both have cerebral palsy, and had been receiving three hours of home care per week.

It was stopped after social services re-assessed their needs and decided they were low priority. "They didn't include my husband because he wasn't there, and then they said they would only carry on home care for five more days," said Teresa.

Audrey Bainbridge, chair of
Continued on page 2



A low priority? Teresa and Robert Jones with two-year-old daughter Amy. Their home and nursery care has been stopped.

PAUL HOWARD PHOTOGRAPHY

Car adaptation fears

The Government is under fire for not doing enough to regulate car adaptations.

At the moment, a buyer has no way of knowing whether an adaptation is safe.

The Department of Transport (DTP) is to introduce a voluntary code of practice for the unregulated adaptation market, including checks by the vehicle inspectorate. It also wants adaptations included in MOT tests.

Ann Frye, head of the DTP's Mobility Unit said: "I think even on a voluntary basis it will carry a lot of weight because insurance companies and Motability will want to ensure that a company is meeting a code of practice."

But manufacturers and industry experts are divided on whether the Government has gone far enough.

Gary Newton, managing director of adaptation company Gowrings, believes more basic

regulation is needed. "I'd question whether voluntary codes of practice are worth the paper they are written on. There has got to be something enforceable."

David Griffiths, *DN* motoring correspondent and chief officer of the Mobility Information Service, believes UK standards are quite high. Regulations could force prices up. "We really need to have something that states this vehicle has been approved by the manufacturer and conforms to their requirements for safety."

Their comments come as fears

are being raised about the safety of some adaptations by car firms.

Peugeot is worried about the adaptation to its 806 by Constables, where the passenger side B-post (the upright strut between the front and back doors that helps to prevent a vehicle crumpling in collisions) is removed to make more space.

Peugeot told *DN*: "We have examined the Constables conversion at Crowthorne Mobility Show. This conversion is not approved or sanctioned by Peugeot Talbot Motor Company."

A test crash on an unadapted 806 at 30 mph reported in *Auto Express* magazine showed crumpling would leave little room for the driver and front passenger.

David Constable, managing director, insists the conversion is safe: "Though we remove the B-post we then put in another sub frame. We put more strength in than we take out. We have strengthened the roof, the floor

Continued on page 3



In a test, this unadapted Peugeot 806 suffered extensive crumpling

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Community care cuts

Continued from page 1

Buckinghamshire Social Services Committee, said: "We are determined to protect the most vital services for people with the greatest needs, but we do have to make savings somewhere."

The Joneses are having to pay for half a day's nursery child care per week for their daughter Amy, two, after the authority cut that back too.

In the north of the county, Keith Masters, regional chair of Scope

and a wheelchair user, has lost two hours of home care because he was low risk. "It was still essential. Just because it was such a relatively small amount it doesn't mean I didn't need it."

Jean Winters, chair of Milton Keynes Council of Disabled People, said people are worried.

"It's happening all over the place. People are going to go without care."

"So many companies are jumping on the band wagon. Some are charging £9 an hour to do house work."

Access committee on skids

DN exclusive

A Government advisory committee on disabled access may face the axe when its funding runs out in March.

Set up in 1984, the Access Committee for England, which includes disabled people, is supposed to advise the Minister for Disabled People and promote the accessibility of buildings and built environments. It has set up 400 local access groups.

But recently it has been overlooked, says chairman Peter Lainson. "We have not had the opportunity to brief the Minis-

ter for Disabled People on very important issues. Ignored for two years, we have had to raise issues with other departments."

The committee is involved with three government departments. It reports to the Minister at the Department of Social Security, gets funding from the Department of Health but deals with Department of Environment (DoE) issues. The DoE has tended to use the Building Regulations Advisory Committee, which has no disabled users, says Mr Lainson.

Civil servants from the departments have been working on a

review of the committee and its future for the Minister. His decision is due in February.

Committee members say the working party has not listened to them properly. They think the committee might be funded for specific projects or perhaps solve conflicts between service providers and users under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Director of the Centre for Accessible Environments Sarah Langton-Lockton said: "The committee can channel grass roots experiences of access back to national government. That is very important and should continue."

MBE for drivers' champion

Arthur Ledgard, disability adviser with the RAC (*right*), was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honour's List.

Mr Ledgard said he was "amazed and flabbergasted" when he received the letter from the Prime Minister's office.

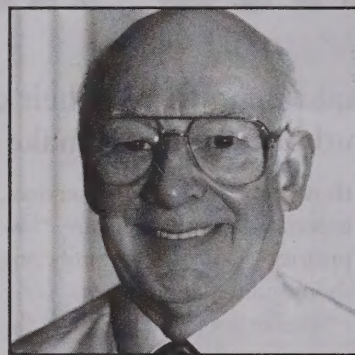
"It makes it all worthwhile, but it is something that no one earns alone."

Mr Ledgard, 69, is a former associate committee member of the RAC and was chairman of the Disabled Drivers' Association from 1984-88.

Disabled peer Baroness Darcy De Knayth became a dame, and there were OBEs for Ian McBain, director of the Scottish Council for Spastics and David Hyslop, former director of the Breakthrough Trust, which works with people who are hearing impaired and Desmond Kettle, executive council member at the RNIB.

Other OBEs: John Bury, chair, Social Services Committee, Assoc of County Councils, Philip Oxley, research director, Centre for Logistics & Transport, Cranfield University.

Other MBEs: Marion Andrews, services to the Multiple Sclerosis Society, Ian Armstrong, chair, South Tyne Committee for Employment of



Ledgard: flabbergasted by MBE

People with Disabilities, Hazel Boardman, Blackpool HIV prevention co-ordinator, Stephen Brunt, for services to sport, Sheila Cant, services to mentally disabled people, Moira Gallagher, services to athletics, Norman Jagger, chair, Arthritis and Rheumatism Council, Troon, Patrick McNamara, chair, Queen Mary's Roehampton Trust for disabled ex-servicemen and women, David McCallum, director of access, Motherwell College, Robert Mumford, former chair, South Beds Dial-a-Ride, Laurence Paton, chair Formby, Crosby Ormskirk Guide Dogs for the Blind Assoc, Catherine Plater, services to people with cystic fibrosis, Mona Tait, services to swimming, Nancy Tait, secretary, Society for Prevention of Asbestosis and Industrial Diseases, Dawn Walker, pre-vocational manager Beneast Training Provider.

Disability Today

Programme four of the BBC *Disability Today* series includes a feature on personal safety on the streets in London and Newcastle with Kim Tserkerzie interviewing two disabled women.

Heather Clarke will be explaining Incapacity Benefit, and Peter White will talk to the rail regulator Sir Richard Swift and a prospective Labour MP.

The programme will be shown from 4.45am-5am on February 1, 8, and 15, with signing and subtitling on February 22 and 29.

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Disability Today.

Disability Today is a new monthly television programme for disabled people, their families and carers, in fact anyone who has an interest in disability issues. The programme will provide information about leisure, work, education, benefits and current issues in an accessible and entertaining format. Programmes will be screened on BBC2 at 4.45am during October through April 1996, so get your video machines ready! Check *Radio Times* & *Ceefax* for details.

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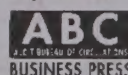
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Stop press

Warning to boxers

Young boxers can suffer "irreversible damage" early in their careers without showing warning signs, research by a neuropathologist has concluded. Dr Jennian Geddes' findings in *New Scientist* adds weight to calls for boxing to be banned (*DN December*).

Scots' home probe

An inquiry has been launched into the activities of a residential home for mentally disabled people near Edinburgh. Humble Village Centre, run by the Algrade Trust, is being investigated by Lothian and Borders police following allegations of sexual abuse and fraud. There was a Commons debate on 15 January.

London DIAL threat

Wandsworth Disabled Advice Service will close at the end of July if Wandsworth council ratifies a plan on 31 January. A new group, with £40,000 a year instead of £27,000, will have to cover a wider range of people, including those with learning difficulties or chronic illness, children, elderly people and drug users.

Help the poor call

Low income families should get state aid to buy major household goods, urged a report in January. *Out of Pocket - Failure of the Social Fund**, by the Children's Society, Family Service Unit and Family Welfare Association, says grants should replace the social fund for poor families. The fund mainly loans money, with repayments coming out of benefits. This is driving many people below a "basic" standard of living, the report argues.

* £7.95, tel: 0171-254 6251.

DLA consultation

The Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) is looking for views on Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley's proposal that the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance should be stopped being paid to people in hospital for more than four weeks (*DN January*). The deadline is 12 February, to SSAC, New Court, Carey Street, London WC2 2LS.

Welfare state study

A commission funded by the Barings Foundation and *Community Care* will study the welfare state from the users' point of view, writes Michael Turner. The Citizen's Commission on the Future of the Welfare State includes disabled people and will hear evidence on benefits, pensions, education, social services, housing and transport. It will report in mid-1996, as part of the UN International Year for the Eradication of Poverty.

Direct care payments furore

The Government is keen to limit direct care payments to physically disabled people under 65.

The move has caused consternation among groups for elderly people and people with learning disabilities.

A bill to allow local authorities (LAs) to give people cash payments for their community care was set out in the Queen's Speech in November (*DN December*). Up to now such payments have been controlled by the LAs.

In a consultation document on the bill, the Department of Health says the Government is "inclined to the view that, in the first instance, eligibility for direct payments should be lim-

ited to adults aged under 65 who are physically disabled".

During the bill's committee stage in the House of Lords on 15 January, Baroness Hollis said: "Whether someone is suitable for direct payments should be assessed individual by individual. There should not be blanket exclusions."

A Mencap spokesperson said: "Although we understand the Government's desire to develop the scheme gradually, this is no argument for leaving out people with learning disabilities."

Tony Maughan, secretary of the Greater London Pensioners' Association, said the move was a form of ageism and was

"illogical and rather mean".

Sally Greengross, Age Concern director general, called the proposal "a bitter disappointment for older people".

The plan is likely to be discussed when Minister for Disabled People Alistair Burt meets learning disability campaign group People First on 22 January.

People First Parliamentary Officer Simone Aspis said: "How do you know if a scheme is going to be okay for people

with learning difficulties if you are not going to do it for them anyway? It is a chicken and egg situation." Consultation on the bill runs until 23 February.

The consultation paper is available in large print, audio or braille from the Department of Health, PO Box 410, Wetherby LS23 7LN. It can also be read on the Internet, on the DoH's "home page" <http://www.open.gov.uk/doh/dhhome.htm>

Motability allegation

Motability is sending vehicles long distances for adaptations to save money, making it difficult for drivers to get the backup they need, it is alleged.

DN motoring correspondent and chief officer of the Mobility Information Service David Griffiths says that in some cases adaptations are not tailored to clients' needs and backup is limited.

"We have people driving round here using hand controls for which there is no agent within 70 miles, even though there is an agent for a similar product five minutes away. So they have no service and no backup for a couple of quid saving."

Brian Page, whose firm is near Heathrow, said one vehicle in his area was sent as far away as Yorkshire. He has seen hand

controls not fitted properly, unsafe or broken. In January, a local customer asked him to correct one of his controls, assuming he had done the work. It had been done in Milton Keynes.

He said: "We spend a lot of money on development and we cannot do that if we are in a price war. At the end of the day, disabled people will be the losers."

A spokesperson for Motability said fitting and repairs were usually carried out by the closest agent. "We use approved suppliers for adaptation work. Cost will come into it, but safety is paramount."

Adaptations fitted a long way from the client were often specialist work, or it was better to carry out complex work in one place, he added.

Car adaptation fears

Continued from page 1

and side of the vehicle."

Vehicle safety consultant Dr Simon Rattenbury, co-author of a report for the Research Institute for Consumer Affairs, is generally unconvinced. "I'm concerned about the removal of the B-pillar in anything, both for frontal and side impacts."

Ford does not approve of Universal Mobility raising the windscreen on the Ford Transit and has refused to give it a "certificate of no objection". The DTp concurs in Ford's view, saying it may lead to a restricted view. Motability will not supply it.

Judy Callow, Universal Mobility managing director, said the company had been asked to develop the conversion by Motability, but Motability then changed its mind.

She attributed the DTp and Motability fears to a number of crashes in Spain.



Spring joy: 14-month-old Jasmina Jushinka and her mother Tatiana are coming to the UK from Russia on 4 February after a campaign by the Down's Heart Group raised £17,000 in one month. Jasmina, who has Down's syndrome and needs treatment for a serious heart condition, had been refused medical help by Russian doctors who said death was the best thing for her (*DN December*). PATRICIA SMITH



Just for starters: chef Finlay Davies is the London Regional Winner of the Department for Education and Employment's 1995 National Training Award. Mr Davies, who is deaf, said he was "very pleased".

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Incapacity Benefit fails to produce savings

Incapacity Benefit (ICB) is failing to produce the savings it was predicted by the Government when it was first launched in April last year.

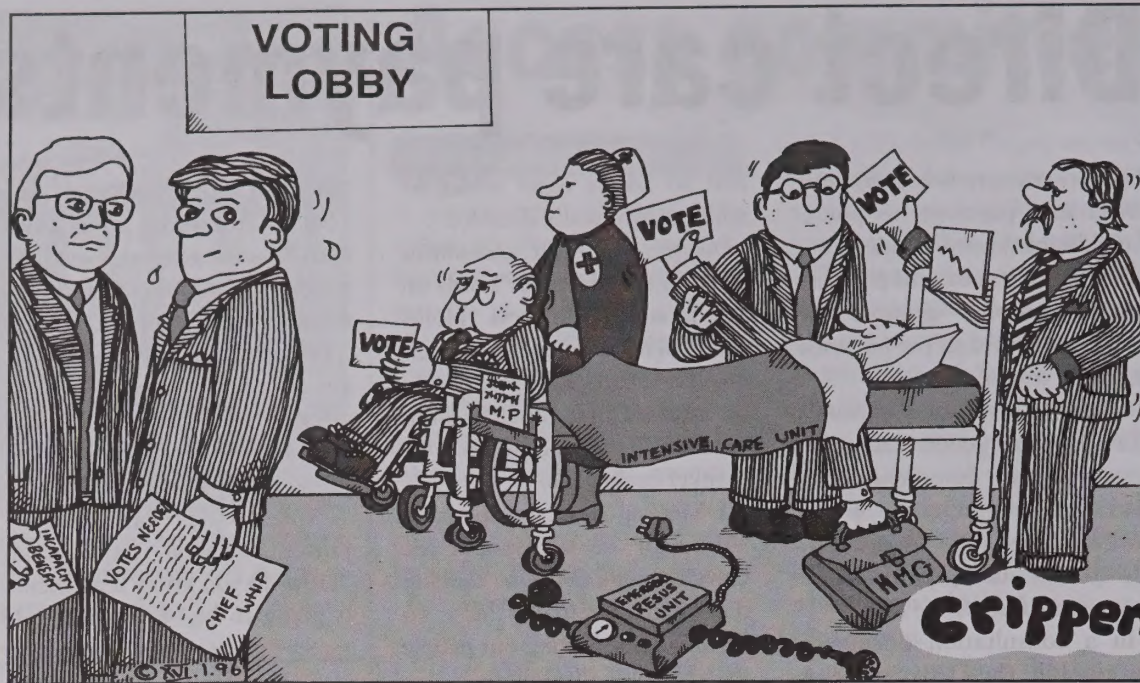
Ministers had predicted that as many as 220,000 people would be forced off the old Invalidity Benefit in the first two years of the new benefit coming into force (DN April).

This would have led to savings of more than £400 million in the first year of operation, rising to £2.3 billion by the year 2000.

But so far, up to December, only 19,000 people have been declared fit for work under the benefit's tough medical tests and 6,520 people are appealing against decisions.

Meanwhile, Disability Alliance director Lorna Reith has said she is "appalled" at plans by Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley to privatise the medical service that assesses ICB claims. Two of the bidders are US health care firms.

• Peter Lilley has ordered an investigation into alleged benefit fraud, after figures were released that showed a 40 per cent rise in the number of people claiming Disability Living Allowance. A report will go to Mr Lilley in the spring.



"With our majority down so low, John, we're going to have to revisit the Incapacity for Work criteria." "THE THOUGHTS OF CHAIRMAN CRIPPEN", PAGE 29

Limiting of Access to Work is confirmed

As disability groups feared, and DN predicted, the Government has limited the Access to Work scheme, which helps disabled people who are in work or looking for jobs.

Education Secretary Gillian Shephard told MPs on 14 December that the scheme, which has so far helped 10,000 disabled people, will now be targeted on renewing "existing commitments" and on people who have been unemployed for at least four weeks.

This means that disabled people

in work who have not already applied for the scheme will no longer qualify, even though the Government admits that 80 per cent of applications come from people already in work.

The change, argued Mrs Shephard, was to cut costs. The scheme's £13.4 million budget for 1995-96 would be "exceeded to a significant extent" if Access to Work continued as it was. The announcement has come before the completion of a review of the scheme, the findings of which are due to be published in April.

Shadow Minister for Disabled People Tom Clarke immediately pressed Education and Employment Minister James Paice on the issue. "The Government introduced this scheme: it is up to them to get the sums right, and provide the funds

to make it work," he added.

Liberal Democrat Social Security and Disability spokesperson Liz Lynne said the move "made no sense". The Government was undermining its own Disability Discrimination Act.

The RNIB has been campaigning to protect the scheme, and called the change "dangerous and duplicitous". Paul Ennals, director of education training and employment, said: "The Government is reining back on a success story. It is crisis management at its worst."

John Monks, TUC general secretary, called it a way of "making disabled people pay for tax cuts".

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) said it would mean disabled people in employment not getting the equipment they needed.

Defection adds to Major woes

The defection of Emma Nicholson to the Liberal Democrats meant it was a glum New Year for Prime Minister John Major.

As DN went to press, Mr Major's majority was down to five, with the expected return of Sir Richard Body to the Tories.

Ms Nicholson, who is hearing impaired and has been closely involved in campaigning for better access for disabled people, is just the latest "disability-friendly" Tory MP to hit the national headlines.

When Alan Howarth defected to Labour in October, he cited the Government's attitude on disability as "an important factor" in making up his mind to go (DN November).

MP Peter Thurnham, who is the parent of a disabled child, is threatening to stand as an independent Tory MP at the next election. And Sir John Hannam, MP for Exeter and joint-chair-



Nicholson: latest of "disability-friendly" Tory MPs to hit the headlines

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of questions that you will want to ask before you make your mind up, giving you all the information before you make the important choice.

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DDA draft regs published

The Department for Education and Employment has published its draft employment regulations for the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The package includes a code of practice, proposals on how to regulate the act and guidance on the definition of disability. Consultation will continue until 22 March, and the regulations should come into force by the autumn.

Moves have also been made to set up the National Disability Council, which will advise on the DDA. Members are expected to be appointed in January.

As DN went to press, no announcement had been made.

Regulations governing the council's expenses and how a member might be removed from

office have been made, and will come into effect on 29 January.

For a free consultation document, tel: 0171-925 5555.

Ramp Parliament!

Labour MP for Bolsover Dennis Skinner urged better access to Parliament on 15 January.

"Is it not time that work was done to provide ramps at St Stephen's Entrance and Central Lobby?" he asked, before adding: "Another place to put disabled people has just crossed my mind: we could stick them in the House of Lords as there are now moves [under a future Labour government] to get rid of peers."

First genetic committee

The Government is to set up the world's first advisory committee on genetic testing. It will monitor scientific developments and advise on ethical, social and scientific implications.

Call on ulcers

MPs called for more money to treat leg ulcers in January. An early day motion noted the "considerable pain and discomfort" caused by leg ulcers, especially among elderly people.

Boxing Bill KO'd

A bill by Lord Brightman to ban professional boxing was defeated on its second reading in the House of Lords on 6 December by 39 to 38.

In brief

Good news New Year

London's concessionary fares scheme, which provides free transport on tubes, buses and British Rail for elderly and disabled people, has been renegotiated successfully. The scheme had looked under threat when five councils held out from making a final agreement (*DN December, 1995*). But in negotiations right up to the deadline of 31 December, the councils hammered out an agreement.

The future of Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard charity DaRT looks secure for the time being. The charity faced running out of money in January. But, said co-director Simon Delf, a deal has now been struck with main backer the London Borough Grants Unit to tide it over. The unit's next meeting in February will, he hoped, put DaRT back on long-term funding.

Arthritis awareness

Ten per cent of the UK's population is affected by arthritis, according to the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council. But new therapies and increasingly sophisticated drugs are helping more people to control or even cure the condition.

The charity Arthritis Care has published the first ever guide to arthritis and young people. *The Ruff Guide to Life for Young People with Arthritis** aims to raise awareness of the condition.

* Free, tel: 0171-916 1500.

Get packaging

Manufacturers are being encouraged to make packaging more tactile by the Institute of Grocery Distribution. *Tactile Information: recommendations for packaging improvements**, includes information on design, best practice and how to make danger signs more tactile.

*Free summary, tel: (01923) 857141.

Belfast shopmobility

A shopmobility scheme to assist disabled shoppers has been launched in Belfast, writes Joan Shannon. It is being run from the city's Victoria Centre.

Tel: (01232) 321521.

Capital support

A business and training support scheme for blind and visually impaired people is to be set up by West London Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). It will provide advice and a formal training to people from Ealing, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Richmond-upon-Thames.

Tel: 0181-577 1010.

Supermarket's Xmas turkey

DN exclusive

A woman with a severe back condition who used a lightweight supermarket trolley to do her Christmas shopping, was forced to empty her goods into another trolley because staff did not think she was disabled.

Lynette Coleman says she was approached by three staff at Sainsbury's superstore in Canterbury on 22 December. They unloaded her shopping in the

middle of the crowded store and put it into a conventional trolley.

Ms Coleman, who has had her spine pinned and suffers constant back pain, has difficulty controlling conventional trolleys. "I was in tears, being surrounded by three of Sainsbury's staff. I was shaking and crying. I just wanted to go home," she said.

"They urgently need to train their staff. They should have enough trolleys to make sure that their customers do not

have to vie with each other over who has the worse disability."

A spokesperson for Sainsbury's customer complaints department said lightweight trollies have been stolen. The department had written to Ms Coleman over the dispute, which was "amicable".

But Rosalie Everatt of the charity Painwise said people who suffered constant pain often conditioned themselves to "keep smiling" and not cause a fuss.

Meanwhile, a disabled man is

furious at his treatment by a Safeway supermarket in Malton, North Yorkshire.

Alan Hacker says parking spaces for disabled drivers are too narrow for wheelchair users to get in and out of their cars.

When he complained, the store's manager told Mr Hacker that not all disabled people used wheelchairs, and then abruptly walked away. Safeway has apologised and says it may widen the spaces next year.



Dominic Lawson (left), editor of *The Sunday Telegraph*, opened the London Lejeune Clinic in December. It is the first UK clinic to specialise in researching the syndrome among children. Mr Lawson's baby daughter, Domenica, has Down's syndrome.

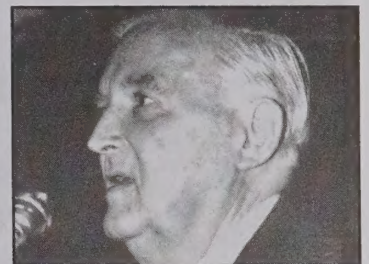
JOHN R RIFKIN

Ian Dawson-Shepherd

Thousands of people with cerebral palsy and their parents will be mourning the passing of perhaps their greatest campaigner and friend, Ian Dawson-Shepherd, writes William Hargreaves.

Born at Port Said in 1915, the son of a colonial official, Ian went to London University. In 1939 he was commissioned into the Kings Regiment (Liverpool), rose to captain, but was seriously wounded in North Africa and invalided out. He became world marketing director for Aspro-Nicholas.

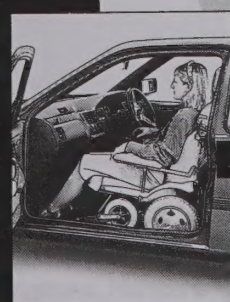
It was having a daughter, Rosemary, born with severe cerebral palsy, that led Ian and three other parents to start the campaign that resulted in The National Spastics Society in 1952. From the moment he flung down a £5 note and issued a challenge to raise a million



pounds, local groups took up the cause and money flooded in.

Like all great pioneers, Ian could be a difficult person to deal with. He was very anti-establishment, especially where local authorities were concerned. He could be very difficult with executive council too.

I well remember in 1953, he "resigned" because the council did not like his request to order six million Christmas cards. I had to chase him to the nearest bus stop through deep snow to bring him back. Well into his seventies and in poor health, Ian founded The Little Foundation to find a prevention or cure for cerebral palsy. He never gave in.



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(quoting M50) for details of how Ford Motability and your nearest Motability dealer can help you realise your driving ambition.



Motability.

In brief

Families failed

Families of severely disabled children are being failed by support services, says the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Of 1,100 parents surveyed, nine out of ten lone parents and two out of three two-parent families relied on benefits. But household bills had increased because of their children's disabilities, states *Expert Opinions*. Half said their housing was unsuitable.

People with learning disabilities are often the victims of persistent low level crime, says a new book, also by Joseph Rowntree. According to *Invisible Victims*, crimes against people with learning disabilities are not given the attention they deserve.

Expert Opinions, £10.50.

Invisible Victims, £17.95.

Tel: (01904) 654328.

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The closing date for the Contenance Carer of the Year Award is 14 February 1996. The winner will get £200, and each regional runner-up £50. People with incontinence can nominate whoever assists them the most.

Incontact, c/o The Contenance Foundation, tel: 0171-404 6875.

Creditable move

The Disabled Drivers' Motor Club has launched its own credit card. The Mastercard can be used by members just like other credit cards at 12,000 outlets worldwide. The Bank of Scotland will make a donation to the club every time the card is used.

Tel: (01832) 734724.

Stroll on!

Are you a bit of a wanderer? DN is starting a series on "My favourite walk" in the spring, and is looking for contributions. So, if you have a tremendous trek, fabulous foray or relaxing ramble you would like to tell us about, drop DN a line. Address on page two.

Corrections

From DN's January issue: Gremlins in the production process caused errors in two of DN's news stories. "Motability leaks" was referring to Motability Finance Ltd and Motability all the way through and a single letter. It was also the Harrow Association for Disability that has pulled out of membership of RADAR, not Haringey. Our apologies.



Shake on it: Lesley Kelly, 51, poses with Valda, the country's first poodle guide dog. The mother of two, from Coventry, says Valda does the job "brilliantly".

COVENTRY EVENING TELEGRAPH

Judge forces care rethink

Gloucestershire County Council must re-assess the needs of up to 1,000 disabled people who have lost home care services, the High Court has ruled.

The December ruling followed the court's decision in June that the cash-strapped council acted unlawfully by stopping people's care services without adequate re-assessments (DN August, 1995).

The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR), brought a Judicial Review in December, claiming that the council should have restored services immediately.

The council had written to all 1,059 service users telling them they would have to request a re-assessment themselves.

By the time of the judicial review, only 273 people had applied. RADAR says others were afraid of a further loss of service.

In the High Court, Mr Justice Carnwath said it was not up to

the claimant to apply for a re-assessment, and the council would have to re-assess the remaining 786 people who lost home care as a result of being considered a low priority. But he rejected a blanket restoration of services in the interim.

"We are pleased that the court has reinforced the long-held understanding that once services have been provided they cannot be reduced or withdrawn unless under a re-assessment," said John Keep, head of RADAR's Independent Living Unit.

Gloucestershire chairman of social services Councillor Andy Pennington blamed Government cash cuts.

"We are caught between a rock and a hard place," he said. "We have to provide the best service we can with the money we have got."

The council will now have to find the cash to carry out the assessments.

Epilepsy Association boss Terry O'Leary dies, aged 48

Terry O'Leary, chief executive of the British Epilepsy Association (BEA), died on 31 December, aged 48.

Mr O'Leary, who had epilepsy and asthma, joined the BEA in 1976, setting up network of

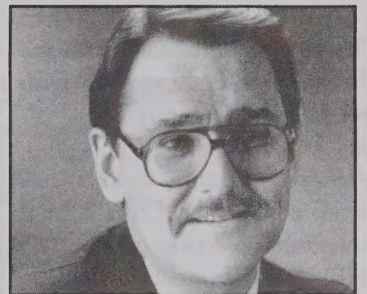
local voluntary groups. He became chief executive in 1988.

Mr O'Leary hit the headlines in November, when he and a colleague at BEA's headquarters in Leeds were attacked by burglars.

BEA chairman Dr Stephen

Brown said: "BEA was his life. He gave his all to his work... In return, he cared very much about the well-being of all his staff."

O'Leary: cared for his staff



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ENDOLITE

Treaties rethink urged

A European Commission report is calling for non-discrimination against disabled people to be included in the treaties shaping Europe's future.

The report, *Disabled Persons' Status in the European Treaties: invisible citizens** was put together by a consortium of disabled and non-disabled lawyers working for the commission.

It was published on the European Day of Disabled People in December and presented to Klaus Hänsch, President of the European Parliament.

The treaties will be revised at the Intergovernmental Conference, to be held in Britain later this year.

Padraig Flynn, European Commissioner for Employment

and Social Affairs said: "Such a clause could allow disabled people to have recourse against the various forms of discrimination they encounter, for example in terms of employment, education, accessibility of public venues and services etc."

At present disabled people are invisible in European Law, argues the report.

It also shows how Europe has fallen behind the USA and Australia in drafting anti-discrimination laws. The UK's Disability Discrimination Act is the only legislation of its sort in Europe.

The commission is preparing a draft recommendation on equal opportunities for disabled people.

Barbara Schmidbauer, MEP

President of the Disability Inter-group in the European Parliament said: "The European Parliament must ensure that when the treaties are revised at the Intergovernmental Conference, the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of disability is included."

The Reflection Group, the group of civil servants drafting the revision proposals, also supports an insertion of the clause.

But Rachel Hurst of Disabled People's International warned that the British and German governments might block it.

* £8.30. From Nathalie Moyer-soen, *The European Day of Disabled People Secretariat*, 7 Boulevard Clovis, B 1040, Brussels, Belgium.



Spurred on: gymnast Ronnie Broomhall, who wants his title back

A new Broomhall?

Ben Walton snatched the overall title at the British Amateur Gymnastics Special Needs National Championships in November, pipping nine times previous winner Ronnie Broomhall.

Walton, 19, of Norton in Hales, took gold in the bars competition, silver on the vault and bronze on the floor exercises.

"I never knew I was going to beat Ronnie this year. It was a tough competition," said Walton, who hopes to repeat his

performance this year.

Broomhall, 27, will have something to say about that. Though he won gold on the floor display and bronze on the bars, a mistake on the vault led to his losing.

He had been thinking of retiring from gymnastics, but losing the overall title has spurred him to go for his tenth title this year.

Broomhall is the star of a 60-second cinema advertisement for John Grooms charity.

Volunteers win Euro praise

A York based-scheme that provides student volunteer helpers for parents of disabled people has won a European award.

The scheme, run by The Children's Society, allows parents to have a break and students to gain practical experience.

PACT (Parents and Children Together) Student Scheme brings children together with students of the University College of Ripon and York St John.

• Suffolk County Council has won gold in the educational integration section of the 1995 HELIOS Competition. The

awards publicise achievements in integration and equality.

The Children's Society, tel: 0171-837 4299.

BBC world series

The BBC World Service is to broadcast a major series on disability issues to nine countries in February. Programmes will be broadcast in eight languages and will go out to Albania, Central Asia, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Romania, Turkey and the Ukraine.

Arabian words

A book designed to influence attitudes towards disability in the Arab world, and Morocco in particular, has been published by the charity Save the Children.

*In Our Own Words** is available in Arabic and English and is aimed at development and disability workers, though the charity argues that it could also be appreciated by a wider audience.

The book gives first-hand accounts of disabled people who work with the agency.

* £10.45, tel: 0171-703 5400.

Women's team Atlanta bound

The British women's wheelchair basketball team has booked itself a ticket for this summer's Paralympics in Atlanta by grabbing a bronze in the European championships in November.

The sporting Brits also took the fair play award for the championships in what was still a hard-fought set of matches.

In a four-team competition, Britain beat Israel to the bronze, while the gold went to Holland and the silver to Germany.

"Because we had Atlanta to play for, there was absolutely no compromise. I'm still nursing the bruises," said team captain Ann Wild.



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RECOGNISED CONVERTER

Jackson takes judo gold

Simon Jackson of Rochdale, took the gold medal at the European Judo Championships for Visually Impaired People, in Valladolid, Spain, in November, extending his unbeaten run to 65 fights in major competition since 1988.

Twice Paralympic and world champion, Jackson, fighting in the 78kg category, faced tough opposition and a partisan crowd before beating Santos of Spain in the final, to take his fifth European Championship.

"These were the hardest ones I've fought in. There's more of a buzz now because I want to stay unbeaten," said Jackson, 23, who won his first Paralympic gold aged 16.

He is optimistic about the Paralympics this year. "There's no point in getting a silver. You don't improve on gold. I know I can win if I train hard enough and fight well on the day. I know what I need to do."



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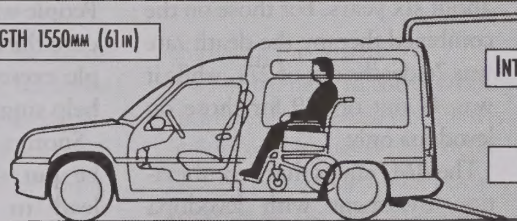
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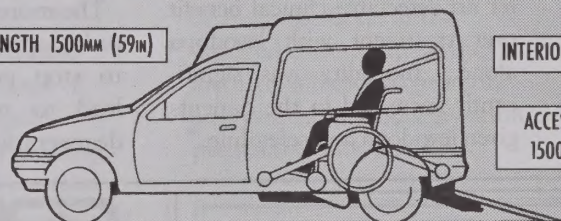


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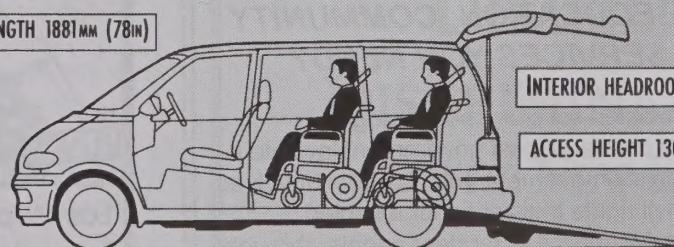


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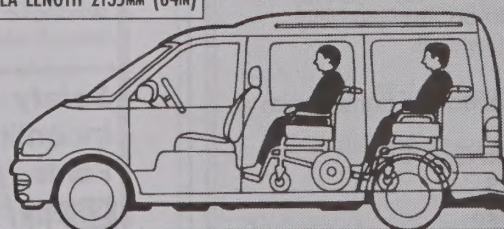


INTERIOR HEADROOM 1370mm (54in)

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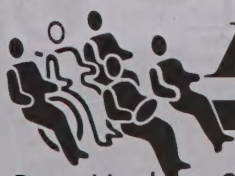
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ACCESS HEIGHT 1450mm (57in)

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VAT ruling sparks drug fears

People with haemophilia could be put at risk because Customs & Excise has slapped VAT on a new synthetic drug.

Customs & Excise decided to add the 17.5 per cent in November 1995, claiming that only blood-plasma products could be zero rated. The drug, kogenate, does the same job as Factor 8, which people with haemophilia use to help their blood to clot.

People with haemophilia used to risk catching HIV or Hepatitis C by using blood-related products. These are now killed off during production, but Graham Barker, director of services and development at the Haemophilia Society, said synthetic drugs are still safer.

"We don't know what might be round the corner. If it [a product] comes from blood there is always the potential risk of viruses.

"Haemophilia centres are not going to be able to afford this extra 17.5 per cent. Some children have already been taken off the product and are back on plasma-derived products.

"Other European countries charge VAT on these sort of products but at a maximum of five per cent. We are the only country that seems to think that drugs are a luxury."

A spokesperson for Customs & Excise said there could be no reduced rate: "The UK Govern-

ment wants to keep the VAT system simple. The more complex it is, the more difficult it is to administer in terms of collecting it."

Parkinson warning

A new form of drug to slow the progress of Parkinson's disease does not improve symptoms and people taking it face a higher risk of death, scientists are warning.

About half of the 120,000 British people with Parkinson's take the new drug selegiline in combination with the more conventional drug levodopa.

People on the combination therapy have a 60 per cent increase in the rate of death compared to those just on levodopa, says the report by Andrew Lees and colleagues at the Parkinson's Disease Research Group, published in the *British Medical Journal*.

The scientists followed the progress of 560 people in the early stages of the condition for about six years. For those on the combined therapy the death rate was 76 deaths out of 271, while it was 44 out of 249 for those on levodopa only.

The *BMJ* states that "combination treatment with levodopa and selegiline in patients with mild, previously undetected Parkinson's disease seems to confer no detectable clinical benefit over treatment with levodopa alone... mortality was significantly increased in the patients given levodopa and selegiline."



Snorer Ian Duke under observation at Bristol General Hospital's sleep clinic. The clinic, the only NHS-funded one in the country, studies sleep behaviour and how to help alleviate acute snoring.

KAREN DAVIES

Singing yourself to sleep

People who snore may be able to cure the condition through simple exercises previously used to help singers train their voices.

Snorers and their partners can be put through misery. It can lead to depression, tiredness and stress. But serious medical interest in snoring only began in the last few years.

The more serious sleeping disorder, apnoea, causes breathing to stop periodically and can lead to memory loss, brain degeneration and heart disease.

Sleep clinics have opened around the country, including one funded by the National Health Service (see above), to study snoring and its effects.

Now a book, *The Natural Way To Stop Snoring**, has been written by Dr Elizabeth Scott, a medical adviser to the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

She realised that singers had stronger throats than most people and rarely snored. The book contains exercises similar to those that singers use to widen their throats. Dr Scott has also produced a cassette *Soundless Sleep For Snorers**.

* £4.99, from bookshops.

• £6.99, from W H Smith and Menzies.

Alzheimer HRT boost

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) can halve the risk of Alzheimer's disease in women, claims an American team of scientists.

The treatment raises the level of oestrogen in the woman's body, but also protects the areas of the brain affected by Alzheimer's.

HRT can reduce the risk of osteoporosis and heart problems, though there are fears that it may cause side effects such as breast and womb cancer. As a result, only 12 per cent of post-menopausal women in Britain receive HRT.

Meanwhile, researchers at the universities of Aberdeen and Edinburgh say that the sons of men who become fathers later in life may be more likely to develop Alzheimer's.

The study, of 1,300 people born between 1915 and 1925, found that men born when their fathers were in their mid-thirties or older were three times more likely to develop the condition.

Sperm in older men is also more likely to carry genetic defects. "As men grow older their sperm is reduced in quantity and goes down in quality," said Professor Lawrence Whalley, head of mental health services at Aberdeen University.

Herbs aid asthma

A Spanish herbal mixture is being hailed as a treatment for asthma.

Some people using the mixture claim they no longer need to rely on inhalers, nebulisers and steroids.

The mixture contains extracts of thyme, eucalyptus, pine buds, elder, echinacea, plantain, beta carotene and aloe vera.

It is being marketed by Frank Moya, a Spanish Government official working in the UK, after it appeared to clear up his wife's asthma. Herbatum Pulm is based on an old Spanish herbal remedy, and has sold 200,000 bottles a year in Spain since 1993. It can be bought in chemists and health shops for £12.95.

• Certain brands of Medix nebulisers may not work properly because of faulty electrical leads, says the magazine *Health Which?* Anyone with a model made between 1989 and 1991 and with one of the following serial numbers should contact Denise Leigh on (01788) 860366. The numbers are: Traveller 2000: 700001 to 710042. AC2000: 500001 to 517618. World Traveller: 000001 to 005357.

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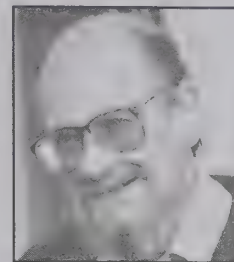
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The disability movement has run out of steam

Vic Finkelstein urges disabled people to avoid navel gazing and piecemeal lobbying and move into mainstream action

It all started with a comment by the commissioning editor of *Inside Out*, the Channel 4 series on disability.

I suggested that future programmes should go beyond subjects like anti-discrimination legislation and present new interpretations of issues just emerging, such as problems in the National Health Service or the impact of the market on the education system.

Television would be contributing at the leading edge of disabled people's struggle for emancipation, I said.

The idea was rejected. Television, I was told, is not good at taking a leading role in developing new ideas.

My thoughts went back to the '70s and those first, regular broadcasts of *LINK* on Sunday mornings presented by Rosalie Wilkins. They certainly played a significant, sometimes leading, role in promoting the social model of disability, the idea that disability is created by a world designed for able-bodied living rather than by the way our bodies are impaired.

Perhaps it is not television's inability to innovate with new ideas that is the problem, but the lack of new ideas coming from the disability movement.

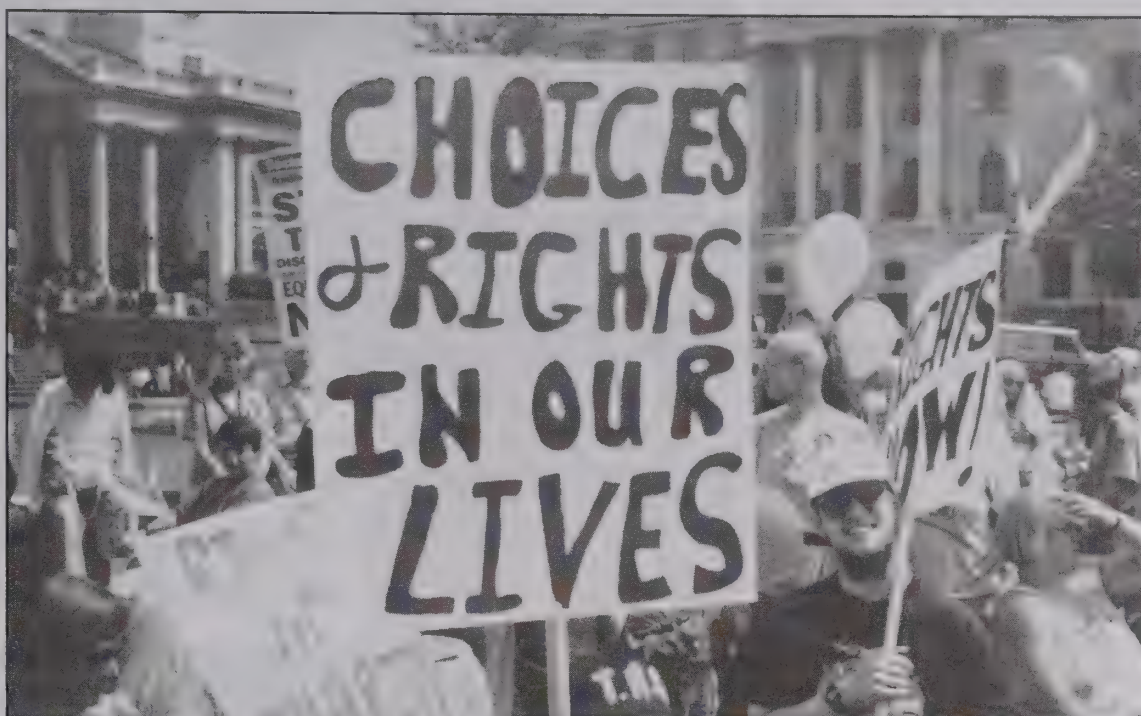
As I see it, the disability movement – by which I mean the important national and local organisations of disabled people and disabled public figures – has lost its vision for change during the past five years. In fact, it has been moving backwards.

Without a vision, there can be no bursting enthusiasm to inspire creativity in the media – in disability arts or television.

No wonder *DAIL* magazine reported in December last year that the AGM of the London Disability Arts Forum (LDAF) "was a disappointing affair. Only a handful of disabled people turned up and the atmosphere was tense. The inaugural meeting, nearly a decade ago, when there were more than 200 people bursting with enthusiasm and a sense of purpose, seems a distant dream...

"So why does it seem that LDAF has gone stale? What new directions should LDAF be going in? What is stopping it fulfilling its role as promoter and supporter of disability arts?"

There are at least three important differences between ten years ago and now.



Grassroots weakness: around 1,000 (out of 6.4 million) people attended the Trafalgar Square rally in 1994

TIM RUSSELL

First, leaders in the movement had shifted the focus of activity away from parliamentary pressure group politics – so favoured by the Disablement Income Group (DIG) and the Disability Alliance – to grassroots work in the disabled community. This gave disabled people a new sense of identity as a social group and inspired disability arts.

Now, sadly, central bodies like

'In the disability movement there is a clear split between two social models of disability – an active one and a passive one'

the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP) and Disability Awareness in Action have returned to pressure group politics with concentrated campaigning for anti-discrimination legislation.

We need legislation, but the movement might have won much more if the Government had been persuaded of the strength of our grassroots support. Only 1,000 people came to the Rights Now demonstration in Trafalgar Square in 1994.

Second, in an effort to take control of how disability was understood, we encouraged disabled people (more than the public or professionals) to concentrate on changing the disabling barriers in the world outside, rather than exploring the attitudes and emotions that came from experiencing discrim-

ination. We wanted to encourage an objective, practical, hands on approach towards the struggle for social change. The focus of attention was "outside in" rather than "inside out".

Since those exciting early years, there has been a creeping re-interpretation of this radical definition of disability. Writers like Dr Jenny Morris have elevated the importance of personal, psychological experience in understanding disability. It has encouraged a shift away from thinking about changing the real world.

Finding insight in the experiences of discrimination is just a return to the old case file approach to oppression, dressed up in the social model jargon.

The third difference is that disabled academics and researchers have hijacked the disability movement's agenda to serve their own priorities, replacing the active vision with a passive abstraction, which excludes non-disabled people.

Tom Shakespeare, a research fellow at the University of Leeds, wrote of how disabled people told non disabled researchers at a 1992 research conference "that they had no right to be researching the disability experience..."

He thinks that those of us who started the modern disability movement tended to play down the role of impairment and that is now being rectified.

But focusing on personal experience is the surest way to return to the confusion between "impairment" and "disability" – a discredited and sterile approach to understanding and

changing the world.

What we have in the disability movement at the start of 1996 is a clear split between two social models of disability – an active (outside in) one and a passive (inside out) one.

The Disability Discrimination Act is about to drive a wedge through the heart of the disabled community as the artificial alliance to promote anti-discrimination legislation predictably falls apart.

Adopting pressure group politics to campaign for legislation has followed all the mistakes made by DIG for an all-inclusive disability benefit, and is threatening to fail too.

The battle to establish the social model (changing society rather than people with impairment) has been won.

The time for consolidation and building democratic organisations of disabled people is ending.

Now we must bring disabled people into mainstream issues – the future of education or the NHS, for example – so they can work with non disabled people to improve the quality of life for everyone.

The future is exciting, but faces us with more unknowns. No wonder people are tending to retreat into the safe haven of "inside out" thinking.

Vic Finkelstein is a senior lecturer in the School of Health and Social Welfare at the Open University. He has been at the forefront of the disability movement for 25 years, as a promoter of the social model of disability and founder member and first chair of BCODP.

This is an edited version of a longer paper.

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JORDANS

The new International Passenger Station at Ashford in Kent opened on 8 January, boasting "a wealth of facilities for both disabled passengers and employees".

The contractors, Laing, have worked closely with the Disabled Passengers' Transport Advisory Committee (DiPTAC) to provide an environment that will make travelling by Eurostar easier for people with disabilities.

If you live near the M25, it may be easier to board Eurostar at Ashford rather than Waterloo. The car park has 40 parking bays for disabled drivers – 15 on ground level and the rest on the fourth floor near the lifts. A covered walkway links it to the main station.

Passengers who need help in the car park can be seen by close circuit camera. The cost is £4 a day – significantly cheaper than airport parking. The ticket withdrawal machines are easy to reach. Payment is made on the return journey by means of a machine in the main booking hall. For those who find this difficult, there is another collection point before leaving the station.

There is a large revolving door

Out of this world

The brand new International Station at Ashford in Kent may look futuristic, but how up-to-date are its facilities for disabled Euro travellers? Merle Davies finds out.

into the main booking hall, able to take a wheelchair. There is also a swing door operated by a large button, intended specifically for wheelchair users. All doors and lifts are set to give plenty of time for entry and exit.

If you arrive by train at the domestic station, there is a covered walkway with a series of ramps to the International Station. These are 1:20 gradient with resting platforms.

The booking counter is at mid height, rather than wheelchair height. It is designed to be accessible to both wheelchair users and other passengers. As with other aspects of the design, this was a compromise.

The telephones have open booths with induction loops. I could just about reach the coin slots from a sitting position.

Lifts to the departure lounge are spacious. The buttons are low and marked in braille.



The shape of things to come: Ashford Station looks modern but accessibility is still a compromise



Merle tries out the wheelchair users' entrance

ALISON MILLER

There are speaking lifts at platform level. The escalators have red lights to warn against going the wrong way.

Non-slip floor surfaces are a safeguard for people with walking difficulties. They have a matt finish, chosen because it does not appear like an ice rink to partially sighted passengers.

Monochrome marvel

Visually, the station is very striking. This monochrome marvel looks like a huge spaceship from the outside.

Inside, there are black handrails around the walls against a background of stainless steel. According to Simon Lander, projects manager for Laing, "The architect did not want to use brighter colours", which may benefit visually impaired travellers. After consultation with DiPTAC, it was decided that black against steel was

enough of a contrast.

Black rubber strips are also used at the bottom of the wall as a guiding feature. In the departure lounge, the sitting area was denoted by a grey-blue carpet which contrasted against the hard surface of the rest of the floor.

Access to disabled toilets is by RADAR key. They are spacious and well equipped. I felt the hand dryer was badly placed – too close to the toilet – but the contractors were willing to reposition it. They also have staff adapted toilets in line with their equal opportunities policy. The baby changing rooms do not cater for parents who are wheelchair users. It is assumed that a disabled parent would not be travelling solo.

A great deal of thought has been put into the construction of the station. Simon Lander admitted compromises had to be made. Laing are a commercial company, but recognise their responsibility to the public. "We do it to make money but also to improve the environment we live in."

Convenient compromise

They invited us to be critical and were amenable to making the minor changes suggested. While appreciating that architects do have aesthetic aspirations and do not want to spoil designs by, for instance, making lower ledges or introducing more colourful features for partially sighted people, I feel that "compromise" will always be with us. But Ashford International Station has given dis-

abled passengers to Europe an alternative and convenient way to travel.

European Passenger Services
tel: (0345) 881881
Information and reservations
tel: (01233) 618500

No change on the trains

Despite Laing's efforts to make Ashford station fully accessible to travellers with disabilities, there are still problems with Eurostar's cross channel shuttle service.

Last year DN reported complaints by a couple who are both wheelchair users. When they travelled to Paris they found the only two wheelchair spaces were in separate carriages. Sue Jamieson had to sit on a seat to stay with her husband, Bob. They had to travel in first class, which meant being separated from their children.

European Passenger Services (EPS) who run the service have made no changes to the arrangements for wheelchair users. They charge a standard rate for wheelchair users with one companion, but have no special rate for families of more than two.

When DN travelled to Brussels with Eurostar last December, the ramp to help wheelchair users from the train was nowhere to be seen. EPS assure us it is now in operation.

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'Having to fight for something as basic as a decent wheelchair is a disgrace'

A parent faces many battles. Some inspire you, others infuriate you, writes Chris Sinfield.

We all search for a way to enrich the lives of our disabled children: we read, talk to professionals, look for ways to help them. Matthew, my son, has cerebral palsy and is visually impaired. Our search led us to Rutland House School in Nottingham, a school run by Scope, where we found a nursery group for young children. This is known as the "School for Parents". The School for Parents is run for children between the ages of 5-15 years. The specially trained staff use the conductive

stimulate the child's senses; they are encouraged to look at objects, to touch, to sing, to vocalise. The group followed a learning programme that included self-awareness and a balanced pre-school education.

On paper, it would appear formal. But it is not. We enjoyed our time there.

But to begin with Matthew hated it. He would cry, just pausing to have a drink or a biscuit. The other mums and staff were really supportive. They kept me going, telling me that the tears would stop, which indeed they did.

Matthew began to enjoy it. Slowly a happy little boy began to appear, with smiles when he achieved something new.

The biggest change was myself. I relaxed and felt much more confident handling my son. We became a partnership, going for the same goals.

One of the strongest points to make is the support parents can give to each other. No one else, or so you feel, can really understand how you feel or has the same problems as you. Working in a group, you learn to appreciate what you've got. When you meet parents who have more problems than yourself and they cope, it can give strength to others.

The joys are shared – when a child achieves something or the children encourage each other. We shared many things, not just cups of tea; we motivated each other and we laughed at silly things, making life-long friends along the way.



Chris and Matthew: "We've become a partnership"

Matthew has become an independent young man (ten years old). We left School for Parents when he started school. Again we received support, when statementing was needed for a school placement.

We keep in touch. There are now 26 Schools for Parents across the country, as far afield as the Channel Islands. When Matthew started there were two.

Finding a wheelchair

Now Matthew's getting older, we face another challenge – and I know I'm not on my own here too. It's getting the correct wheelchair. It would seem the older the child gets, the more difficult it becomes to get the correct seating. Not because it is not available, but because of the lack of funding.

buggy with assorted pads. We were turned down on the grounds that they, the health authority, could not justify the expense, because Matthew would not be sitting in the chair for hours a day.

Matthew has now outgrown the buggy, so we arranged to attend the wheelchair clinic once again. We arrived armed with information on the most suitable chair (having first tried it), with support from the physio and occupational therapists. Needless to say, we were turned down, even when it was pointed out that they had supplied it to other children in my area. I was told that the policy had now changed. I've heard that one before! It always changes just before my appointments.

All they would offer was a very basic chair, which was too large, and which I felt did not meet Matthew's needs. They were very sorry, but it was a case of "take it or leave it".

The same thing has happened to other parents I've met who live in different counties, so is it an on-going problem?

Or is it, as Frederick Linden-Wyatt wrote (*DN January*), "the ones who shout the most" who are the ones who receive?

Having to fight for something as basic as a decent wheelchair is a disgrace. We shouldn't have to resort to charity to meet our children's needs if we cannot afford it ourselves. It would be interesting to know how widespread the problem is.

Rutland House School, tel: (0115) 9621315.



the older a child, the more difficult it is to get the best seating

education philosophy, supported by the Peto Institute in Budapest. They work with parents to develop basic skills – sitting, looking, eating, playing, standing – things that come naturally to other children but are difficult for children like Matthew.

Matthew was 16 months old when he joined the school. It made a refreshing change to find somewhere where the

parent is encouraged to work in partnership with their child. With conductive education, you teach the child as a whole person. It is not different from professionals dealing with the child's development.

The group we joined was small, about six children with their mums. The staff were friendly and quick to put you at ease. On our first visit we observed the children working (they have similar needs). The team leader led the session using toys, songs and simple instructions to take the child from sitting to standing. The programmes are used to

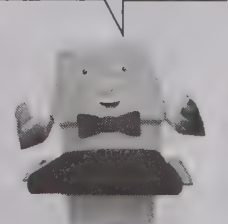
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Dreaming spires?

Not entirely, says Sharon Mace, in the first of our series on UK cities

Oxford, a city of dreaming spires and punts in the summer, is a place genuinely as beautiful as the guide books tell us. But, while they describe the splendour of Christ Church Cathedral and the majesty of Magdalen College, what do they tell us as disabled travellers or hopeful students?

The answer is very little. Oxford may be a mecca for historians, but with history comes cobbles, windy staircases and preservation orders galore.

An access guide, *Oxford on a Level*, produced some years ago by the Oxfordshire Council of Disabled People (OCDP) for the city council is not widely available and lots of its information is now outdated.

The best thing to do is listen to the advice of local disabled people. Call Dialability (an information service on all issues related to disability) on tel: (01865) 791818 or OCDP on tel: (01865) 792226.

Getting there

Getting to Oxford is relatively easy. The train station, tel: (01865) 722333 is fully accessible, including toilets and orange badge parking spaces.

For coaches, the Oxford Tube, tel: (01865) 711312, and Citylink, tel: (01865) 772250, run every 20 minutes between London and Gloucester Green

bus station. This has a RADAR toilet but no parking. There is also an excellent "park and ride" system with buses every ten minutes, though not adapted.

Not all buses may be adapted but most taxis are, and many take wheelchair users. Try ABC, tel: (01865) 007700, and Radiocabs, tel: (01865) 224422. Accessible hire cars are sometimes provided by the Red Cross, tel: (01865) 57377. "Ring a Ride", tel: (01865) 793777 is available on a pre-book, first-come-first-served basis.

The universities

Oxford University is made up of about 40 colleges situated all over the city. Many are open to the public, particularly when students are not in residence.

Access is not wonderful but the Oxford University Student Union has produced an access guide, available from the University Admissions Officer, tel: (01865) 270207. Try Trinity College in Broad Street and Christ Church in St Aldates, as these are worth seeing.

While at Christ Church, visit the famous meadows, where you can watch people attempting to punt on the River Isis. There is flat access from the college.

If you plan to study at Oxford, St Catherine's is the most accessible college, though others are possible. You need to

check practicalities with both the college you want to be with and the academic department you intend to study in.

Contact numbers are available from the central university switchboard, tel: (01865) 270000, with further advice from the student's Disability Action Group. Leave a message on, tel: (01865) 270777. There is also Oxford Brookes University, tel: (01865) 741111. The access is undoubtedly easier, with accessible accommodation in the main halls of residence.

Shopping

If it's shops you're after, the main area is in Queen Street and Cornmarket. Most shops have flat access and lifts. These streets are pedestrianised, but buses are everywhere, so watch out. There are two modern shopping arcades, the Westgate (off Queen Street) and Clarendon Centre (off Cornmarket).

The covered market is worth a visit, if only for the atmosphere. The best entrance is via the Golden Cross, next to Boots in the Cornmarket. Down the High Street, the shops become less accessible. Blackwell's is one of the biggest bookshops in the world and mustn't be missed. The main bookshop in Broad Street is accessible via the blue door on the right! Though someone has to help you in the lift (ring the bell), this listed building has been made as accessible as possible.

Eating out

There are several accessible restaurants to choose from in Oxford, although levels of



Magdalen College may be majestic, but history makes for poor access
PETER TITMUS/SOUTHERN TOURIST BOARD

access do differ. The best all round has to be the Gourmet Pizza Co, tel: (01865) 793146, in Gloucester Green, with good access, attitudes and adapted toilet. Others include Fatty Arbuckle's, tel: (01865) 201899, also in Gloucester Green and with a large, accessible toilet, and The Mitre, tel: (01865) 244563, a Beefeater restaurant and pub on the High Street. If you want something more upmarket, try The Lemon Tree (01865) 311936 on Woodstock Road.

Entertainment

For entertainment, the Playhouse is the most accessible theatre (see box). The Apollo tel: (01865) 244544, describes itself as accessible, but wheelchair users will soon find out that this involves being bumped down stairs by staff.

The Old Fire Station, tel: (01865) 794490, is an arts venue, bar and nightclub. The theatre space is accessible via a platform lift but the number of wheelchair spaces changes with each production. Its bar area is accessible via George Street and they often have live bands from 10pm. All other nightclubs in Oxford are inaccessible, as is Northgate Hall, the Lesbian and Gay centre (01865) 200030.

There are two accessible cinemas, though neither have adapted toilets. The Phoenix, tel: (01865) 512526, in Walton Street has two screens and Magdalene Street, tel: (01865) 244607, has flat access to its single screen.

Oxford is manageable. The secret is to plan ahead, enjoy yourself and don't forget your camera!

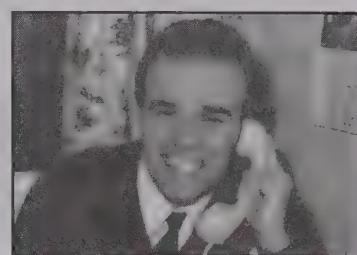
Life in the house that Jack built

Located just outside Oxford, Jack Howarth house is a Scope-run centre that provides residential support for nine young severely disabled adults, writes Nic Paton.

Manager Graham Owen says staff try to use facilities in Oxford as much as possible to integrate residents into the life of the city. Residents use the health authority-run Rivermead Rehabilitation Centre and the jacuzzi at Oxrad (see opposite page).

Within Oxford itself, residents use the shops and go to the cinemas, even though the facilities are not ideal, he says.

"Parking can be a problem, although there are spaces. It is a question of educating staff. You



Jack Howarth's Graham Owen
GILL SHAW

get problems if you park on streets where there are lines going up on to the kerb.

"There has been a battle going on for a long time to try and get accessible public transport. Taxis are pretty good, and we do use them quite a bit.

"People do walk into town, but it is a good walk, and an even tougher walk back.

"Quite a few of our staff find it is easier to take people to concerts in Reading."

One breakthrough for the new year, he says, is a possible deal with Oxford's College of Further Education. The college has drawn up a specialised curriculum for people with profound disabilities.

The course is currently only open to people in health authority-funded facilities, but the centre hopes to be allowed to join it next year.

Subjects will be as diverse as photography, environment studies, social skills and speech therapy. There will also be a sensory room. "There will be no enablers required and no cost to us, which is great."

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Oxford awaits decision on accessible leisure complex

An accessible, purpose-built leisure complex looks set to be built on the outskirts of Oxford by mid-way through 1997, reports Nic Paton.

Oxpens, a proposed £17 million development near the railway station, will include a nightclub, five restaurants, bingo hall, multi-screen cinema and riverside pub.

It is due to go before Oxford city council's planning committee for a final decision on 28 January.

Nick Pentith, managing director of Cheshire-based developers Pentith, says the firm is keenly aware that Oxpens needs to be accessible in a city where history has made access difficult.

"Access to the site as a whole will be our responsibility. It will be a total package." An access audit was conducted by Dominique Hiscock (see right), and there were public meetings over the summer.

Councillor Betty Standingford, chair of the access sub-committee, believes the scheme has potential, as long as it is planned properly.

"We need the money from it to do other things in the city, but not at the expense of building another horror down there."

And the council's equal opportunities (access) officer, Tom Presland, says the scheme has to be closely monitored.

"When the plans were resubmitted, the considerations given to accessibility were very much greater than they had been in the first place."

Mr Presland, who has been in his post for two and a half years, says one of the biggest problems Oxford faces is congestion caused by the bus deregulation.

Deregulation is a county responsibility and, as such, is out of the city council's control.

"The city centre must be the most dangerous pedestrian area in the entire world. The fact

that people can't walk down the street without being run over is an important issue."

The Labour-held council has had success with carrying out pedestrianisation, making council and public buildings more accessible and improving taxis, he argues. But individual issues, like a new access guide to the city and improving the door access to the Westgate need to be addressed.

Oxford's fully accessible Playhouse Theatre, tel: (01865) 798600, has won £2.5 million of National Lottery money. Deputy manager Hedda Beeby says the money, for a total refurbishment, will allow them to increase the wheelchair spaces from four to six and make the backstage area accessible. "In the long term, we want to extend the building to allow us to put a lift in," she adds.

The Oxford Rickshaw Company runs guided tours of the city. A 45-minute tour costs £15, 20-minutes £8. Details, tel: (01865) 251620.



Dominique Hiscock: "What people think is accessible is ridiculous." NIC PATON

When is accessible not accessible? When you can get in, but cannot go to the loo, argues Dominique Hiscock.

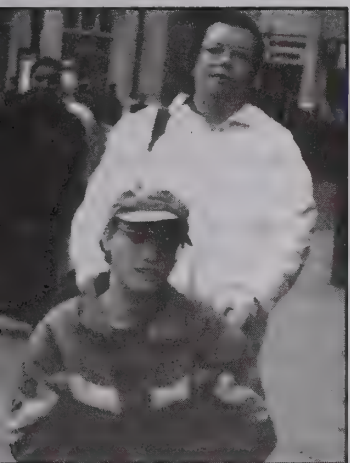
This means that, for her, the vast majority of pubs and restaurants in Oxford are inaccessible. "It's like, where shall we go tonight, The Mitre or The Mitre? To go to the cinema, I have to phone up 24 hours in advance," she says.

Dominique, 27, has multiple sclerosis and has used a wheelchair for the past three years. She graduated from Cardiff in 1991 with a degree in interior architecture and now runs a business in the city advising companies on how to improve their access.

Her "top five" hates are, she says: "The way people look at me as if I'm stupid, pubs with no disabled toilets, inaccessible shops, cramped clothes shops and do-gooders."

"I am not a radical, but what people think is accessible is so ridiculous. Facilities should be graded according to a UK standard of accessibility. There should be some sort of symbol."

Mark's & Spencer's, for instance, she says, is nominally accessible, but has no toilet facilities. The Virgin Megastore, which has just been revamped, now has a flat entrance but no lift to the upper floor. McDonald's has upstairs toilets and fixed seating that is "a disaster". The Brewhouse pub put in toilet facilities, but left a step in front of it, meaning you have to be lifted in and out. And the toilets in the Westgate Centre are too high and have no grab rails. "It's so stupid. You have a situation where someone like me actually needs to go to the loo more often, but there are fewer facilities."



Anthony and Cathy Lygo take on Oxford city centre NIGEL BARKLIE

Fun city to be in

Seventeen-year-old Anthony Lygo loved to use Oxford's ice rink until his disability, Allagille syndrome, a rare degenerative condition, meant he could no longer go skating.

Oxford is a fun city for young disabled people, he argues. Access isn't too much of a problem, as he can walk, though he tires easily and also uses a wheelchair. "Steps can be difficult and the buses are a problem getting on and off."

Anthony attends an exercise class. He is also a keen football fan.

Having the John Radcliffe Hospital on the doorstep for his regular visits is "brilliant", says his mum Cathy. Facilities like the lifts in the Westgate shopping centre help, though some things don't change, she adds. "Pedestrians just don't notice you."

Sporting honour

This year's New Year's Honours List has given recognition to a pioneering leisure scheme in Oxford.

Oxrad, in the Marston area of the city, is an accessible sports and leisure centre for disabled and able-bodied people.

It has been running for ten years, funded by the donations and a grant from the council. Its founder and chairman Alan Porter-Smith was awarded an MBE in the Honours List.

"I am delighted Oxrad has been officially recognised. It will do us a lot of good," he says.

Oxrad offers integrated classes for all ages. It has a gym, fitness room and spa room. There is also a bar, kitchen, pool table and table tennis table.

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Alan Porter-Smith: recognition NIGEL BARKLIE

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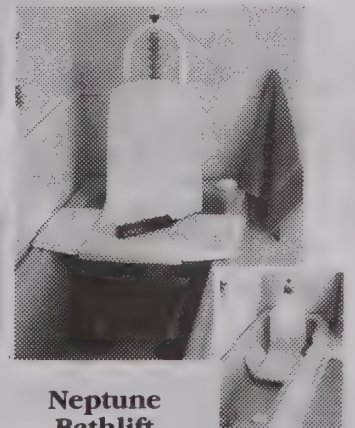
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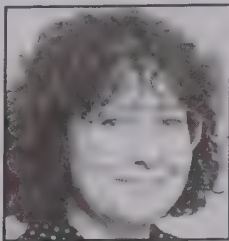


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Letters to the Editor



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e-mail: dnow@d-access.demon.co.uk

Unfair advantage for Motability

It would be wrong for Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley to cut the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance for disabled people who spend four weeks or more in hospital, yet exempt those paying for cars or wheelchairs through Motability (*DN January*).

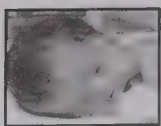
It would cause hardship, and discriminate against a lot of disabled people like myself who finance their cars in other ways, ie use the money to buy

and maintain a second hand car.

Not everyone likes to deal with Motability, because at the end of the three year lease you do not have anything for your money, and not everyone can afford the payments for hire purchase and still maintain and insure their cars. These people would be losing out because they do not buy or lease from Motability.

Jane Kayes
Knightswood, Glasgow

A baby's right to life?



I agree with Aidan MacFarlane that society needs to

debate a disabled baby's right to life (*DN January*), but to my mind he asks the wrong questions.

Dr MacFarlane asks if society is prepared to pay to support disabled children. Society pays far more to support the Royal family, for example, or the Scott inquiry into ministers' misdemeanours. So why are disabled people not considered worth it?

MacFarlane says care for a severely disabled child takes money away from other services.

Strictly speaking, that's true, but the same could be said of everything else, including doctors' salaries. Society can afford it if it so chooses.

MacFarlane says society has failed to provide adequate support, so we must give parents the right to choose to let the baby die, otherwise we are penalising them for society's failure.

Would he say the same to those providing shelter to the homeless? This is a defeatist and dangerous argument. It shows the sorry state we are in: we are no longer prepared to do our bit, through paying taxes, to support our fellow citizens.

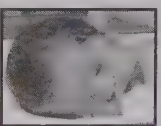
The real question is how we

ensure governments provide comprehensive community care services and civil rights to start seeing disabled people as equal human beings.

Parents must be given adequate and appropriate support (isn't that why Scope was set up?). If they cannot cope, then the state must step in with adoption schemes, just as it does when the child is not disabled.

This whole debate often hinges on the belief that disabled people's quality of life is poor. The biggest irony is that disabled people's opinion is rarely sought on this matter.

Ruth Bailey
London NW2



Only disabled people know the experience of disability,

and because we are excluded from the debate it is not surprising that Dr Macfarlane feels he is left to "play God" and parents are isolated and frightened of making wrong decisions.

There are a lot of disabled parents who could give valuable advice and support on the positive experience of having a disabled child.

As a doctor, he feels that the quality of life can only be diminished by severe disability. He has obviously not contacted disabled people to validate or test out his fears. His own negative assumptions of disability prevail.

As a Canadian court commented when charging the father of a "compassionate homicide": "It is no defence for a parent to say, because of a severe handicap, a child's life has such diminished value that the child should not live any longer."

So who decides? Dr Macfarlane no longer wishes to be responsible and his argument for the Government to intervene is frightening.

The Government spends millions on internal investigations on themselves and yet creates the myth of the "cake" syndrome: take too much and there is less for others. We know that millions are sitting in the coffers from unclaimed benefits and that nearly all our national assets have been sold, but where is the money?

Given the appropriate resources, says Dr Macfarlane, parents could feel supported so they do not have to take on the

full financial, social and emotional needs of that child. But parents do take on those needs and it seems okay if the child is not disabled.

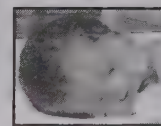
And what if the child becomes disabled later in life – do they give up the right to life then?

When I asked my doctor if, as a new fundholder, this would affect the way he viewed my needs, he said that disability does not matter; any of his patients could become disabled and he would expect all of them to have a right to services.

But Dr Macfarlane does not seem to argue that disabled children have the basic human right to life, let alone services.

Disabled people are seen as an economic drain when we are in fact contributors to society. After all, we pay taxes like everyone else – for non accessible services such as transport and education.

Patricia Rock
London W13



Further to your excellent article on "A baby's right to

life?", I should like to point out the importance of remembering that there are some 5,000 severely handicapped children in institutional care in this country.

These children are in care because they are too severely handicapped for their families to look after them directly.

I believe that every child should have a secure and loving family home and that as many as possible of these children in care should be fostered or adopted.

Parents and doctors who make the difficult decision to allow a severely handicapped baby to die, should not be criticised by those who are not prepared to adopt or foster such a child themselves.

Peter Thurnham MP
House of Commons

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DN's diary

Privatisation principle?

Fears that privatisation of rail services will hit disabled people have been born out in Derbyshire. Wheelchair user Barbara Summerfield, 62, was barred from boarding a train at her local railway station, Long Eaton.

She was told by staff that no one was available to help her on to a train and she would have to go seven miles to Nottingham to board one.

For five years British Rail staff have helped Miss Summerfield at Long Eaton. The new operators, Central Trains, say they have stopped such services for safety reasons. Shadow Transport Minister Clare Short has written to Central Trains protesting.

How many *DN* readers have heard this story before?

Thrown off course

Michael Wackenheim is furious that France's highest court has banned dwarf-throwing on the grounds that it is degrading. He wants the European Court of Human Rights to rule that the court acted illegally.

Mr Wackenheim is 3ft 10in, has lost income and, anyway, enjoys the "sport".

£-in-the-slot wheelchairs

Congratulations to Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham for introducing slot machine wheelchairs. Disabled visitors at East Midlands' largest hospital put a £1 coin in the machine, get a wheelchair, and set off along the 26 miles of corridors. When they leave, they can reclaim their money. Hospital spokeswoman Anne Farnsworth said wheelchairs were often left around the complex. Now "a wheelchair is always available."

Marigold Hope will be writing about her latest adventures for the *DN* student diary next month.

The cream of Manchester

Broadcaster, access expert and political radical Mark Todd has won the illustrious Mancunian of the Year award. Rod Hermeston went to find out what drives him.

It's a cold, grey day in Manchester. The taxi takes me past the accessible tram system. At the town hall, the lift has braille numbers, but the poor lighting would make a partially sighted person struggle. Rome wasn't built in a day I tell myself.

Mark Todd arrives on an electric scooter, an apt first view, considering this is the man who has just been made Mancunian of the Year for setting up the city's first Shopmobility network. The scheme allows disabled and elderly people to borrow electric scooters and wheelchairs free of charge.

Mark is in illustrious company. Past Mancunians of the Year have included football legend Sir Matt Busby and artist L S Lowry.

'You start off as a working class kid at the bottom of the heap and they send you to a dustbin for disabled children.'

With his cropped hair and narrow spectacles, he comes across as a lively, energetic man, and speaks with a broad Mancunian accent.

It is a face and voice familiar to those who watch ITV's *LINK* programme on Sunday mornings, which he presents.

He's off to a strong start. *Disability Now* cannot speak with the same authority as programmes like *LINK* because it isn't run by disabled people, he says. "*LINK*'s segregated, but there's nothing wrong with choosing segregation. There's nothing wrong with a programme that's made by disabled people on disabled people's issues.

"Able-bodied people would water it down."

We squabble about this, albeit in a friendly way.

Mark is on his second stint as access officer at Manchester City Council, having returned to the job in 1992 after his first foray into television. He has advised on Manchester's arena and velodrome and the Bridgewater International Concert Hall. His one regret is not working on the tram system, which he praises.

In 1994, he set up the Shopmobility scheme by persuading a local company to give the scheme free space in

one of its shops. This covered the main cost, with European Union money buying ten scooters. The scheme now has 400 members.

So, is he pleased? "The people who made this award know very little about disability politics and disabled issues, but they can see that something has taken place. Any other award and I wouldn't be as chuffed. I love Manchester."

The son of working class parents, he grew up in Salford. Though a bright child, he was restricted by the education system. "The only school that was available was no more than a day centre for disabled people."

The determination of his parents, especially his father, helped him get into Thomas Delarue in Kent, a school for students with special needs, now closed, that was run by The Spastics Society, now Scope.

He believes he was lucky. So many other children are failed by the system. "You start off as a working class kid at the bottom of the heap and they send you to a dustbin for disabled children."

After Thomas Delarue, he went to Eccles Sixth Form College and Bradford University, where he graduated with a degree in politics and

literature. He's always enjoyed a good discussion. "The dinner table when I was a kid was a debating table."

But his struggles as a student and then in the job market radicalised his political beliefs. "In those days you'd expect another kid who'd been to

university to get a job easily. But I wasn't getting anywhere. I thought 'you bastards'.

"There is nothing like a bit of self-interest to find out what people really believe. Every victory for disability politics generally is a victory for me."

This is why he refuses to



Mark Todd: "Every victory for disability politics is a victory for me." MANCHESTER METRO NEWS

reveal his disability (he has cerebral palsy). "It removes the emphasis from where the blame lies for the problems. Our commonality lies in the way we are treated."

His difficulty over finding a job led him to do voluntary work. But by 1985 he was Manchester's access officer, ironically working in the same town hall outside which he used to protest.

The fact that whoever does the job has to be disabled suits him down to the ground. "I firmly believe you can't be an access officer if you are not disabled. There are thousands of people out there who can't do the job properly."

And he certainly doesn't rate the Disability Discrimination Act. The Government will find ways around it, he believes.

In October, six charities – Mencap, Mind, the RNIB, RNID, Scope and RADAR – said they would "work closely with the Government" to implement the act, a move that horrified him.

"They [the six] have always been a disgrace. They are on a par with missionaries in Africa, a classic case of the white man's burden. They are just looking out for themselves, it's all about self interest."

The best future lies in direct action by disabled people, and a radical shake-up of voluntary organisations like the "big six", he argues. It is an uncompromising, but heartfelt, view.

"They need ripping down, all the money taken off them and given to the people who should be in control of the situation."

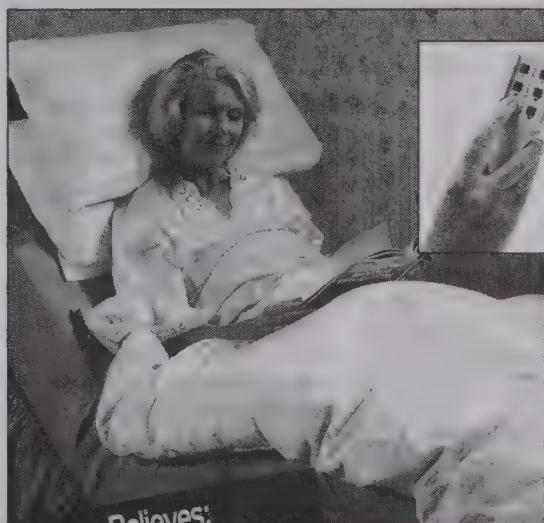
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Win a fintastic fishing trip!



Here's your chance to net an all-expenses-paid fishing holiday on the picturesque River Doon in Ayrshire.

Once again, *Disability Now* has joined forces with Total Hygiene (who market the famous Clos-O-Mat automatic toilet) to offer you this superb opportunity.

If you are disabled or a carer all you have to do is answer the four questions below and complete a tie-breaker.

The winner will enjoy a four night stay for themselves and a companion in a first class hotel. They will have three full days fly-fishing for trout and salmon on the River Doon plus expenses.

One runner-up and companion will win three

nights accommodation and two full days fishing plus expenses.

The Smithson Fisheries on the River Doon are one of Scotland's most exclusive game fishing areas. Experts will be on hand along with staff from Total Hygiene to give help and advice.

Last year's winner Terry Moseley (above) was bowled over by his trip. "It was brilliant – the holiday of a lifetime," he said.

The competition is open to all *DN* readers.

Closing date for entries: 31 May, 1996. Winners will be notified during the first week of June. The trip will take place early in August.

The competition is not open to *DN* staff or associates.

To win the holiday of a lifetime just answer these simple questions and send this form to the address below.

In fishing for trout or salmon what is:

1. A fly?

2. A nymph?

3. A hatch?

4. A cast?

Now complete the tie-breaker in up to 25 words.

Fly-fishing in Scotland is a holiday that:

.....

.....

.....

Name

Address

.....

.....

Telephone

I need personal care, so I will bring a helper: yes/no

I use a wheelchair: yes/no

I shall need to borrow fishing equipment: yes/no

Entries to Clos-O-Mat Fishing Competition,
Total Hygiene Limited, Hygiene House,
2 Newton Street, Stretford, Manchester M32 8LG
Telephone: 0161-866 8080
Fax: 0161-866 8233

Bored, lonely or just in the mood for dancing? Then *DN* can help. On the next four pages, we look at different ways to meet people, and a different kind of marriage ceremony. But first off, we get our glad rags on with Mik Scarlet.

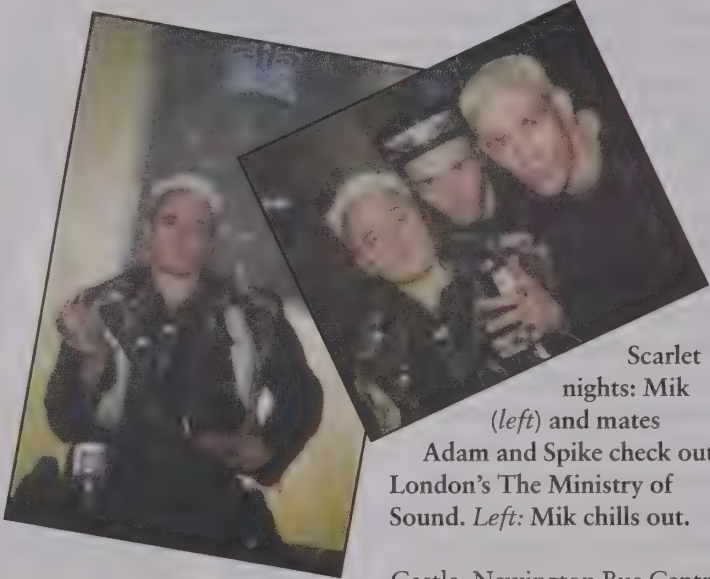
Since first going in my chair 15 years ago, the one thing that has always struck me is how inaccessible nightclubs are.

As Valentine's Day is looming and, in my experience, clubs

of clubbing. For years I went to the Electric Ballroom in Camden Town, 184 Camden High Street, NW1 8NH, tel: 0171-485 9006, which has wheelchair access through a back door. Just ask Brian, the manager, at the front. The music on a Friday is Goth Industrial Rock and on Saturday it's Soul and Garage.

The Ballroom doesn't have very accessible toilets (they're up a small flight of stairs, so bring big mates), but it is where I met most of my girlfriends, so it's fun.

Since I've got into dance music I discovered nirvana for disabled clubbers – The Ministry of Sound, down in the Elephant and



Scarlet nights: Mik (left) and mates Adam and Spike check out London's The Ministry of Sound. Left: Mik chills out.

are the best place to meet a partner, I thought I'd give you a few ideas of where to go to meet Mr/Ms Right.

London

Now, this is where I live, so it's where I've the most experience

Castle, Newington Bus Centre, Newington Causeway, SE1 6DF, tel: 0171-378 6528. This club is perfect: fully accessible, ramped, with adapted toilet.

All this and great music, beautiful people, and a friendly atmosphere. Get there early to avoid the queue.

Get so

Mik Scarlet checks out

The Jazz Cafe in Camden, 5 Parkway, NW1 7PG, tel: 0171-916 6060 is also worth a mention.

Heaven, Under The Arches, Villiers Street, WC2N 6NG, tel: 0171-839 3852, is the country's leading gay club. There is one step at the back, but the management say they are always prepared to help people in. Big night is Saturday.

Brighton

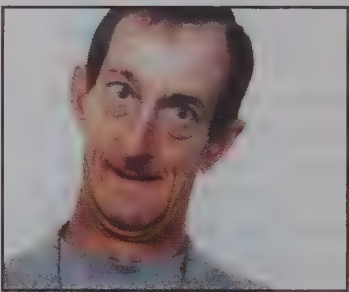
This is my favourite holiday location, mostly because of The Zap Club on the sea front, 188-193 Kings Road, BN1, tel: (01273) 821588.

Not only does it have full access and toilets, but it has something on nearly every night, from bands to comedy, theatre and great dance nights at the weekend. SPQR is the Zap Club's monthly gay night. Next one is on 1 February.

The club has also recently received National Lottery money to update its facilities.

Luton

Luton? You cry. But yes, this is my home town and so I had to mention The Mirage, 1 Mill Street, LU1 2NA, tel: (01582) 29131. It's all on one level and is okay for a dance, a beer, and a laugh. The staff are helpful,



Like most disabled males I had become reluctantly accustomed to receiving the same social status as a pot plant by females ranging in age from 18-80.

As long as I was well cared for seemed the only important ingredient for happiness, the logical fact that I longed for love and sexual fulfilment was conveniently ignored.

However, on my 50th birthday I decided to make a positive attempt to find love, so my move was to place an advertisement in the "Personal" section of *Disability Now*. "CP male, late forties, looks like a kipper fillet, seeks lady for intimate friendship."

To my amazement, two replies came in, the first from Cardiff. This was written in a very formal way and the lady

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ted, get clubbing

of the hottest UK venues. Additional research: Hannah Crabtree



ring first to check out a club's access. But staff are often more accommodating when you actually get there.

DAVID SWINDELLS



All clubs have flyers, like these (for The Electric Ballroom), and are a good way to find out what's going on where. Trawl your record shops for details.

and, well, it's in Luton, say no more.

Nottingham

I found The Black Orchid, Redfield Way, Lenton, NG7 2VW, tel: (0115) 9863211, by mistake one day while filming an item for Channel 4 on how hard it was to go clubbing in a wheelchair.

After a whole evening shooting outside clubs that wouldn't let me in, the researcher yelled "thank God, I've found one", so we arrived

at The Orchid to discover a fully ramped disco with the biggest adapted toilet I've ever seen. It also was packed with pretty girls, so I had a great time.

Manchester

My brother is studying in Manchester, so I go up regularly. We've been to a mixture of places and The Hacienda, 11-13 Whitworth Street West, tel: 0161-236 5051, passed with flying colours.

However, I did find that the door staff were a bit off and it

does have a strict dress code at the weekend.

Rockworld, 65A Oxford Street, M1 6FQ, tel: 0161-236 9971, does have a few steps up to it, but once in it is flat with big toilets and the staff are very helpful and friendly – the only problem, of course, is that it plays rock music all night!

Sheffield

The Leadmill, 6/7 Leadmill Road, Sheffield S1 4SE, tel: (0114) 2751347, is fully accessible to wheelchair users, with widened doors and adapted toilets.

Newcastle upon Tyne

My only brush with clubbing in geordieland was playing a gig at The Riverside, 57-59 Melbourne Street, NE1 2JQ, tel: 0191-261 4386. A small venue that does do club nights, it was totally accessible, if a little grubby.

Nightclubs often refuse to let in disabled people, claiming they are a "fire hazard". This may be because of the prejudice of managers, but often it is as a result of genuine confusion about licensing laws and concerns for safety. As yet, there has never been a large-scale study of nightclub access. Perhaps now's the time? Why not tell us what you think. Address, page two.

Mik's top tips:

- Go by word of mouth. If your friends say a club is accessible, go and try it out. They might be wrong but it's always worth a try.
- Ring before you go, but always try to underestimate your disability to the club. You always find the venue more accommodating when you arrive than over the phone. This is more a way of making sure that it's not down three flights of stairs.
- Try to take some able-bodied mates along. They come in handy to get you up and down steps or negotiate any hazards – and after all, slaves are essential on a night out!
- Never give up! If one club turns out to be a nightmare there will be another one. Always remember, you might have missed out on a dance, but they've missed out on all your lovely money.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive guide.

More ways to meet:

Handicate Friendship Agency is a dating agency for people with disabilities and able-bodied people. Tel: (01473) 226950.

The Outsiders' Club offers disabled people a chance to meet, whether for friendship, mutual help or to form relationships. Details: PO Box 4ZB, London W1A 4ZB, tel: 0171-739 3195.

W brought together!

h Davies (left) and Ruth Palmer met through *Disability* s "Personal" column.

impression she was doing me a reply. It was swiftly buried. cond was written on dazzling yellow had come from a lady living in the an, who expressed herself in a et deeply genuine way. By instinct I at here was a lady who felt as I did – and desperately seeking love and ss, thus my life became much richer elightful Miss Ruth Palmer entered it.

Shows no boundaries

esponded twice a week and during two years we got to know and each other. Although our backgrounds ally different, our opinions on nearly ts of life were virtually as one. The drawback was the distance, and f us was going to make the first move. April Fool's day 1994, I flew from to the Isle of Man. The plane



journey was great, but the butterflies in my stomach were giving me a rough ride. As I walked through the arrival gate my legs turned to jelly as thoughts of rejection flashed through my mind. Fortunately they vanished as my lady flung her arms around me and said, "at last we've met my darling".

For the next ten days we shared a double room at a quiet hotel, laughing, loving and talking. Since then Ruth has spent two holidays in my home town of Swansea. Probably at 53 I'm rather old to fall in love, but it's happened, and I find it the happiest experience of my life. I feel no anger towards the local ladies who ignored my sexuality – just pity.

Personal, tel: 0171-636 5020.

Last chance to win your dream holiday

Want to get away from it all in the sun? Why not enter our prize draw? Two lucky *DN* readers could be jetting off to the balmy Balearics with Access Travel, the UK's leading specialist travel firm.

The prize is a week's self-catering holiday in Palma, Majorca, flight included (total value £600). You will

stay at the luxurious, new Aparthotel Voranova, which swimming pools, pool bar, sun terrace, gardens, restaurant, gym, sauna and grocery store.

The complex is fully wheelchair accessible. Your accommodation will have a spacious bathroom with roll-in shower. Drivers can have

free use of a car (not adapted) for the week. Non-drivers will have free transfer to and from the airport plus food to the value of a hire car.

Sounds too good to be true? Satisfied holidaymaker Don Minett from Cardiff has just returned from the Voranova. He says: "Staff are friendly and there are plenty of facilities."

How to enter

Just send a postcard with your name, address and telephone number on it to: Dream Holiday, *Disability Now*, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

Names will be drawn from a hat. The judges' decision is final. Offer not open to *DN* staff or associates.

Closing date: 12 February



It's not every Monday evening you get to gaze at a man dressed as a French maid, scrubbing the floor while having his bottom whipped. This evening, though, was to be spent perusing the album of Cynthia Payne, Britain's most famous madam, and talking about old times in Ambleside Avenue, Streatham, south London, scene of the notorious "luncheon vouchers for sex" parties.

For a £25 voucher, partygoers got food, drink, a mucky film, a floor show – and a girl. Among those who visited before the music stopped in 1986, after the second raid, were lawyers, accountants, vicars and MPs, as well as a number of elderly and disabled clients: the former enjoying a discount, the latter paying nothing unless they had a girl. "It was my little bit towards society," says Ms Payne.

With the films (*Wish You Were Here*, *Personal Services*), the book (*An English Madam*, by Paul Bailey) and now the new video (*Cynthia Payne's House of Cyn*), it seems we can't get enough of her brand of naughtiness. All the titillating bits are there (slaves, bondage, transvestites), but it's all done in the best possible suburban taste.

"Cinders" was born in Bognor Regis on Christmas Eve, 1932, the elder of two girls. Her father, a ladies' hairdresser on the cruise ships, had just come home for good when her mother, Elizabeth, died of throat cancer. Cynthia was 11 years old. "There was no love in our life, no affection whatsoever," she recalls. "My father looked after us food-wise

Tea and cynpathy

Alison Rowat braved deepest Streatham to find Britain's most famous "madam", Cynthia Payne



Cynthia Payne casts an eye over her floor show. "I never looked on this house as a brothel; it's a home."

GARY CALTON

and that, but not emotionally. I suppose he was frightened. I used to hear him crying in the night for my mother."

The tale thereafter, told well by Bailey, is of men who did her wrong, falling pregnant at 19, backstreet abortion and other sorrows. She eventually landed on the game, rather unhappily, for two years.

She now dislikes this tear-stained version of her life, believing it makes her look "silly" and "vulnerable".

Bustling about her sitting room after a long day of interviews to launch the video, she is a tiny figure, dressed smartly in black and white, looking like a blow-dried Queen Mum.

Whether she was born one, or made one, Cynthia was an outsider, always trying to warm herself with the company of others. The parties seem to have been an expression of this. Punters who saw the ad in a sex contact magazine were vetted by letter and interview. Those who received an invitation to Cyn's – elderly, shy, disabled, frustrated, misunderstood, downright kinky – were, in different ways, also outsiders.

Peter, a wheelchair user, hadn't been out of his house for 15 years. "It was quite a challenge for me," Cynthia remembers. "I started visiting him, talking to him, but still he wouldn't come to the parties." One night she opened the door and there he was. "I couldn't believe it. I was so excited, anyone would have thought the king had arrived. When it was time for the men to take their girls upstairs he decided to have a girl. We couldn't ask him to go upstairs, so I said to the rest of the men, come on, let's all go out to the kitchen. We had poached egg on toast."

She met another client, Desmond, at a club for disabled people she had been invited to address. His life had got off to a miserable start when he was 18 and desperate to lose his virginity. His dad, not knowing what else to do, left him for an hour with a prostitute in Earls Court. "It was a terrifying experience," says Cynthia, "all

over in ten minutes, a hand job. Then she just dumped him in the wheelchair while she got on with other clients.

"It wasn't like that at Ambleside Avenue, with its comfy chairs and cups of tea.

"When I started the parties it was just a bit of fun, but as time went on I realised that there was a real need for it. I used to hear the stories of men who had lost their wives, or lived on their own, and how they hated going into an empty house. I realised that running a brothel wasn't such a terrible, sordid thing. I never looked on this house as a brothel; it's a home."

Joe, another patron, liked the



Cynthia: "Disabled people get so little affection, let alone sex"

JANE BOWN

mannered atmosphere. "The girl would have to come to me first before I would do it. In the bedroom, she'd ask you what you'd like. I'd say straight sex, nothing more. Some of the men used to go up two or three times, but once was enough for me."

The disabled clients were never into weird sex, which

Cynthia has a theory about. "People who go in for the kinky stuff are fed up with the ordinary stuff. Disabled people get so little affection, let alone sex, that they don't get that one stage further."

There's not much that shocks Ms Payne. One request, though, did ruffle her. "I got a letter from this bloke with all these photographs of women with one leg. Now that is weird." He didn't get a reply. Men with disabled wives came along, and a few disabled women.

Bruce, a disabled ex-client, has found there is (a sex) life after Cynthia. "There are a few people like her around," he says. "It's just a question of how you get to know about them. But the whole sex scene in London has changed since then; all the parties are big business now." He advises people to get into the "scene" via newspaper small ads.

"If I wanted sex and I was disabled I would advertise in a sex contact magazine," says Cynthia. "But I would suss out

'I got a letter from this bloke with all these photographs of women with one leg. Now that is weird.'

whether he genuinely wanted me or whether he was going to use me. It's very difficult, but I don't think disabled people are daft. In fact, I think they're pretty cute; they know the dangers of exploitation."

Life has moved on for Cynthia. She still loves to hit the headlines with her dreams of sex on the NHS, being Minister for Brothels, and standing for Parliament representing the Payne and Pleasure Party. But at 63 she's doing okay – after dinner speaking, Edinburgh Festival, grandchildren, it's all go.

I ease next door's cat off my lap – another outsider – and prepare to leave, piling more layers on top of the hiking boots, woolly socks and trousers that I had chosen to wear on my pilgrimage to the sex goddess of south London. As I step into the night, she asks sweetly: "Are you warm enough in that, dear?"

I walk away from Cynthia like many before me – with a bit of a glow.

Cynthia Payne's House of Cyn, £13.24, tel: 0171-437 0457.

HANDIDATE

for people with disabilities

Handidate has helped many couples get married, so come on you lonely hearts, do something about your LOVE LIFE

Be assertive join HANDIDATE

The Wellington Centre
Chevallier Street
Ipswich Suffolk

Imagine a traditional bride patting effortlessly down the aisle, like a meringue in full sail, towards her tall upright room waiting at the altar. For my fiancé, Adam, and I, tradition offered few comforts. Although I'm a walker, I can't stand for long. Adam is a wheelchair user who feels at home in his "grunge gear" and thinks "three-piece" is strictly for living room furniture. Religion has not been an important part of our lives. But, like many couples of no faith or mixed faiths, we felt it could be wrong to marry in a church that neither of us visits. I must confess, we did try church – Evensong, the 1662 version. I loved it – for form rather than content. I loved the language and the music. Adam was so lost by prayer book, psalms and unfamiliar surroundings that most of his under-breath mutterings were, not intentionally, but undeniably, unrepeatable. New options became available



Agnes and Adam cut the cake

Last year, thanks to the Marriages Act of 1994. Local authorities are now able to license buildings other than registry offices for civil ceremonies. This means hotels, private homes and even zoos. Sadly, your own home or garden are not possibilities. Venues must be "dignified",

We did it our way

Agnes Fletcher and Adam Thomas wanted to celebrate their marriage without religion. Humanism offered the answer.

permanent structures open to the public.

We weren't looking for gimmicks – a football pitch or matching white bikinis. We found a beautiful, accessible 16th Century barn for our ceremony and reception. Having both in the same place cut down costs and travel access problems. Unfortunately, it wasn't able to get a licence to hold civil ceremonies.

So we chose a different way: a humanist ceremony. This allowed us to be and to say just what we wanted.

Humanists believe there is no God and no afterlife. They believe we all have responsibility for our own lives, the community and the world.

Humanism is based on the idea that everyone is equal and has rights, freedom, dignity and responsibilities. They believe solutions for the future come from within ourselves, rather than supernatural intervention.

One of the British Humanist Association's (BHA) activities is to help create non religious ceremonies to mark the principal milestones of life – birth, marriage and death. They also provide a national network of trained "celebrants" who can lead ceremonies.

There has been a massive growth in such ceremonies in recent years. Unlike the new licensed ceremonies, they can take place in almost any setting – indoors and outdoors.

No two humanist wedding ceremonies are the same because they are all composed to reflect the wishes and personalities of the couple.

Differences can be celebrated

in a way not possible in a church or registry office. Couples with children often arrange a ceremony in which they take part. Humanists also recognise that partners of the same sex may want to express their commitment to each other.

You can choose words, music and ideas that are relevant to your beliefs and your way of life. An important element in our ceremony was the sense we both have about our partnership being important in the work that we do in the disability movement and how the fact that we are both disabled is such a positive part of our relationship.

The BHA reports that most couples do not choose to combine a humanist ceremony with one conducted by a

'The ceremony... will hold powerful memories and provide emotional strength and sustenance for whatever difficulties lie ahead'.

registrar called out for the purpose. The humanist bit apparently can't start until the registrar has left the building. Also, the costs are higher. Although a humanist celebrant's fee is modest and even negotiable, the new civil ceremonies can cost £200.

We found our ceremony evoked very positive responses from religious and non religious friends alike. Many guests have written to say how sincere they thought it was – and how much they enjoyed it.



All you need is love: Agnes and Adam in the 16th Century barn

Every wedding is a piece of amateur theatre and we certainly gave our audience something new.

The BHA is beginning to get more enquiries from disabled people. In one recent wedding in Cheshire the couple were deaf and the whole ceremony was signed. The BHA have approached the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People to develop sign language ceremonies.

Our wedding was undoubtedly the most memorable day of our lives – for all the right reasons. Preparations were elaborate and enjoyable. Nails were manicured and buffed; hair was shampooed and shaped and I spent ages pondering shades of lipstick.

Adam chose a very elaborate waistcoat but no jacket, because he feels wheelchairs and jackets don't mix. We asked friends to read poems

and wrote the other words together.

But the day itself was an opportunity to think, not about the wedding but about our marriage itself – the future course of our partnership.

The ceremony was a supremely important moment in our relationship. It will hold powerful memories and provide emotional strength and sustenance for whatever difficulties lie ahead.

These feelings have little to do with the legal aspect of being married and everything to do with the words we spoke and the commitment we made on that special day in front of those we love and respect.

British Humanist Association, 47 Theobald's Road, London WC1X 8SP, tel: 0171-430 0908, fax: 0171-430 1271.

To Love and to Cherish: a guide to non religious wedding ceremonies, £3 + 50p p&pp from the BHA.

A fine romance

Debbie Sherrington writes

Dave and I have been together for 16 months and I never thought I would find such a loving relationship. We have known each other as friends for a few years through a holiday disability group. Dave worked as a helper and we met on one of their holidays. Friendship turned to love in August 1994 in Dublin. The romance continued for the rest of the week. I told him to phone me if he wanted to see



Together: Debbie and Dave

me again. I did not want to pressure him into a relationship.

He rang and we've been together ever since. He moved in with me about six months ago and we're getting married in June.

It has been the best time of my life. Sometimes I worry about my disability – I have cerebral palsy. I wonder why he is with me. But he says he loves me and doesn't see my disability. It took me a while to learn to trust another man after the way I have been treated in the past but I trust Dave with my life now.

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Holidays need not bust the bank. A motoring break can be cheap, easy and enjoyable, as *DN* discovers this month. We visit France and Denmark on p23, and then travel down to Spain on p24. But first, *DN*'s motoring correspondent offers some wise words of advice.

A motoring holiday has the potential to be the most versatile and satisfying of all holidays, whether combining hotels, self-catering or camping. But it does need careful planning, especially when travelling abroad.

Whatever your destination, it will almost certainly involve driving your car over much greater distances than is your habit. This puts strain on the driver, so make sure you are up to the task ahead. Get plenty of rest before you start, and if possible ensure that someone else can share the driving.

Your vehicle will almost certainly be carrying up to double its normal load, and maybe even towing a caravan or trailer. Don't forget to buy a small kit of spare bits and pieces for your car.

Breakdown cover is a must. National Breakdown's Greenflag EuroCover, tel: (0113) 2393666, offers excellent value for most European

Have wheels, will travel

Are you really ready to roll? David Griffiths gives his top tips for a carefree holiday.



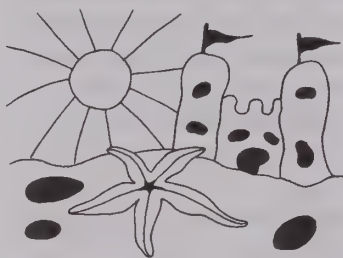
Jean Griffiths in central France. Roadside facilities there have improved no end in the last seven years.

DAVID GRIFFITHS

countries, while AA's Five Star Europe, tel: (0345) 555577, is essential for Eastern Europe.

A green card is advisable for most countries and compulsory for some. It should be requested from your insurance broker at least two weeks in advance. This will bring your cover up to European standards. A breakdown warning triangle is compulsory in almost every country too.

The new RAMP route service,



tel: (01743) 761181, fax (01909) 562430, operated by the Disabled Motorists' Federation (DMF) can help you plan your journey. Allow three days to a week, depending on how busy the staff are.

Get a good phrase book and try to learn a few words before you set out. Learn some basic phrases – lead-free petrol, diesel, tea, please, thank you.

Invest in some good maps (*Michelin* for France and Belgium, *Kummely & Frey* or *Collins* for other countries. The Map Shop, tel: (01684) 593146, has a good postal service.

Fewer ferry bargains

Many ferry companies do still offer concessions to disabled drivers, but most are less than they used to be. You do not have to be a member of a disability motoring organisation to qualify in most cases. The DMF, tel: (01743) 761889, can advise on access, concessions and choice of route.

Compared to Le Shuttle, tel: (0990) 353535, ferries are cheap and give you a chance to relax. Le Shuttle offers a 15 per cent

discount to disabled drivers. A mid-week high-season return would cost £226. Unless you are able to walk competently and cope with doors while in motion, you will find that you must remain in your vehicle.

In Britain, Austria and Holland most motorway service areas are wheelchair accessible. But only France offers universal adaptation, a result of effective policies over the last seven years. Germany, Italy and Belgium lag behind.

In France, you must pay to use the autoroutes. The toll barriers are impossible if you are alone, and your passenger will be called upon to press buttons, collect tickets and, worse still, pay. Announce your arrival by stating "handicappé" – the operator should charge you at class 1 rates (the cheapest) regardless of your vehicle. There are no concessions for disabled drivers on Italian toll roads.

While facilities on French motorways are excellent, stray away and you will be fortunate indeed to find an adapted toilet. This applies to most countries. In fact, Britain is

well ahead when it comes to the call of nature.

RADAR's *Holiday Guide for Disabled People*, (£7), tel: 0171 250 3222, is undoubtedly the best source of information for Britain. RADAR also publishes *European Holidays and Travel Abroad* (£5) and three excellent factpacts (£2 each) covering transport and equipment, specialised accommodation and general information.

Mobility Information Service, (MIS) tel: (01743) 761889, can offer advice and has hundreds of accessible roadside hotels suitable for overnight stops. It also has information on some more unusual destinations, like Poland, Russia and Hungary.



Services like National Breakdown's Greenflag EuroCover are a must abroad

Camping for the Disabled, tel: (01952) 507653, or MIS, has details of adapted campsites in most European countries.

Finally, motoring abroad involves driving on the "wrong" side of the road. If you have no previous experience, don't be put off, but do take care, especially when turning left.

Watch out for basic differences in motoring behaviour and regulations, such as "orange diamond" priority signs, which give you right of way, or, more importantly, a lack of them!

Cancel the papers and milk, check you have insurance for the whole of the period, but above all else, close your front door, forget your problems and have a safe and happy holiday.

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Allez abroad

Hannah Crabtree talks to two freewheelers who ventured afar

For mouth and foot painting artist Alison Lapper, driving means independence. She used to drive an adapted Renault, but for her birthday last year she treated herself to a "top-of-the-range" Honda Civic.

On her last motoring holiday she visited Canet Plage in the south of France. Canet Plage is about 10 miles from the Spanish border and it took Alison and her friend about a day and a half to reach their destination.

Before setting off, Alison (who is not a wheelchair user) arranged extra cover with the AA, and made sure they knew about her disability, so if she did break down she'd get immediate help. She did not have to arrange accommodation as she was visiting friends.

Alison got the ferry from Newhaven to Dieppe, which was "plain sailing" apart from being unable to find an adapted toilet onboard.

Once on the continent, she

had little difficulty adapting to the driving conditions. She did not find driving on the other side of the road as difficult as she had expected. It was only when she got home that she had to make sure she was on the right side of the road again.

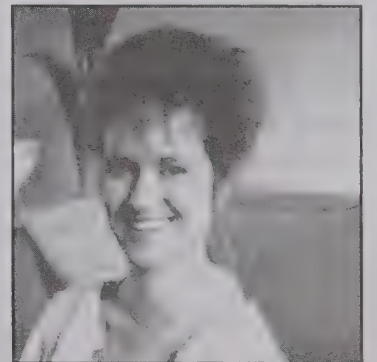
The scariest moment was when the adaptation on her accelerator cable snapped. Unable to control the car, she had to swap places with her friend, who steered the car into the lay-by and took over until they were able to have the adaptation mended.

There were other problems. The unmanned toll gates would have been a hassle if she had been on her own. Also, she needed assistance at the petrol stations. "On the practical side, it is a lot easier and nicer to go with a friend because places just aren't geared up for people with disabilities." And parking was sometimes difficult, as English orange badges mean nothing abroad.

But having her car on holiday

did provide more freedom. "I went where I wanted to go. I could get to places I couldn't normally because I didn't have to rely on the bus or the train."

Alison toured the countryside



Alison Lapper: on the road

and villages around Canet Plage. The picturesque fishing village of Collioure, which has inspired many artists in the past, was of particular interest. "I spent most of my time driving around looking. It's a chance I don't normally get."

French Tourist Board, tel: 0891 244123.

vie en rose: have car, have freedom FRENCH GOVERNMENT TOURIST OFFICE

All the way to LegoLand

chairman of the Disabled Drivers' Association you would expect Jim McKean to go on regular motoring holidays. His most recent trip was a fishing excursion to Viborg, Denmark. Jim, who has brittle bones and describes himself as "fit and disabled", drives an adapted Toyota Selica. He travelled with his friend, Maurice Hodgkin, an ex-trucker who is paraplegic. Maurice chose a Danish ferry company DFDS's 7-night package from a fishing magazine. Jim did not take out extra travel insurance, his car is still under warranty. DFDS offer a 50 per cent concession to disabled drivers, but not when you book a package deal. Jim and Maurice worked out that paying separately for travel and accommodation, even with

their discount, was dearer than the package. It is always advisable to check any special offers before booking. The Danish Tourist Board is very helpful, and has a lot of disabled visitor information.

The ferry from Harwich to Esbjerg took 21 hours (a long journey for unaccustomed sailors). They shared a large, specially adapted cabin on the main deck.

"It took about two hours to drive from Esbjerg to Viborg. Driving is quite slow as there is a 50 mile speed limit," says Jim.

The hotel in Viborg was on a big lake, which made it easy to reach the fishing grounds. Because of lack of space, Jim and Maurice had only taken fly-fishing equipment for trout.

This was not suited to conditions on the lake and

their success greatly increased when they managed to talk the



Jim McKean: gone fishing

local tackle shop into lending them coarse fishing tackle.

While in Denmark, they also visited an accessible LegoLand. Jim says, "You don't realise the amount of work gone into the Lego models till you're there. It's not as big as Disneyland but there's a lot to see." Viborg, an old Danish town

was easy enough to get around, but was expensive. A pint of Carlsberg costs about £4. Eating out was also expensive so they ate at the hotel.

Danish Tourist Board, tel: 0171 25958.

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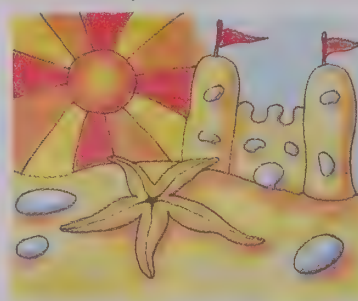
True Brit Dave Allcock swapped his pounds for pesetas, went in search of the “real Spain” and loved it

“Blackpool in the sun” is how I used to view Spain. Bernie, my partner, had nagged me to go abroad for years. Eventually I gave in on the condition that we saw the “real Spain”. So, in September we set off for sunny climes. Bernie does not have a disability, so would be responsible for most of the leg work along with our eldest son, aged 15. He has recently

as cheaply as possible. Our plans had to be flexible, but designed like a military exercise. We booked a camping holiday with Eurocamp, at a site called Parc Playa Bara in the south. We decided to drive the 2,000 miles there and back in two weeks. We would see France and journey over the Pyrenees into Catalunya, then go to Parc Playa Bara and return home via

a luxury if you stay away from the main cities. Toll roads are the easiest way of travelling. They are generally free of traffic and cost effective. If you can muster a few simple phrases in Spanish, you will find out how friendly the Spaniards really are. The *Berlitz* Spanish phrase book came in handy. The campsite has extensive facilities ranging from a swimming pool to a supermarket. The tents have level-entry doors and don't discriminate against their occupants – including the mosquitoes, spiders and ants. There was plenty of space and ample cooking facilities.

Do all you can to exterminate mosquitoes. Sprays, candles and heated fumigators should be at the top of your packing list. Our holiday was easier than we anticipated because the weather assisted my medical condition. After a couple of days I could discard the wheelchair for elbow crutches. Rural Spain is a long way behind the UK in terms of accessibility. But in cities like



Get away from it all: the inner sanctuary at Tarragona cathedral
DAVE ALLCOCK

Barcelona and Tarragona, with their wide streets and modern shops, access to the built environment is not a problem. Parking is not plentiful in large towns, though, and watch out for the blue lines on kerbs and road sides. These are the Spanish equivalent of pay and display. Barcelona is a huge city with many sites to see. Perhaps the most intriguing is the Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Famillia, which should be finished some time in the next century. This church looks like a collection of wet sandpiles on top of each other and has to be seen to be believed. The best

way to see the city is by one of the many tourist buses that run all day in the holiday season. Plans for next year's holiday have already started. This will take us with Eurocamp again to the Italian southern coast via Le Shuttle, Motor-rail and, of course, a little driving.

Factfile
16 nights camping cost £1,200 for two adults and two children. Road tolls cost £80. Petrol, breakdown insurance and green card were £140.
Eurocamp tel: (01565) 650022.



Dave and family camped at Eurocamp's picturesque Parc Playa Bara

received the same diagnosis as myself – congenital spastic parparessis – a degenerative condition that affects the lower spine in adult years. My youngest son, aged eight, was totally impressed with the thought of foreign travel. “Super cool”, he said. The agenda for the holiday was to see as much as possible,

Zaragoza and Pamplona. Crossing by ferry with P&O was relatively simple. As a member of the Disabled Drivers' Association, I used their booking service and got a 50 per cent reduction. Our route had been designed for us by Eurocamp. All we had to do was follow the instructions. Driving in France and Spain is

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John 14:27

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Chris Davies

It has been almost ten years since Nabil Shaban, co-founder of the Graeae Theatre Company, has performed with them. He has been tempted back by the opportunity to play the evil, avaricious Volpone in *Flesh Fly*, Trevor Lloyd's adaptation of Ben Jonson's classic.

The show opens on 17 January and is as exciting as their last play *Ubu* – with sharper teeth. The company have adopted an anarchic, irreverent attitude to the work, subverting the original text to show up disability issues and ideas. The dramatic irony hits hard.

This works well because the original play (like so much of our literature) deals with the idea that moral imperfection is reflected physically. With disabled performers, the company repossesses this classic and adds a new dimension and meaning to the language.

The play tells the story of a rich, greedy, malicious man who is also bored. He relieves this by exploiting the avaricious weaknesses of those around him.

The "flesh fly" of the title is his slave Mosca. He is Volpone's parasite – his mosquito – the devious architect of his grand plan.

The play follows Volpone's quest for wealth. He pretends to be at death's door and is showered with gifts from would-be beneficiaries of his will. Conspiring towards Volpone's death they are prepared to sacrifice all they hold precious for material gain.

Trevor Lloyd's version makes it accessible and modern without losing the poetry of the language. Music, song and costume all make this a sumptuous feast of a show and it is played by a very strong cast – in particular Simon Startin as Mosca, Jonathan Keeble as Corvino and Nabil Shaban as Volpone. Funny, thought provoking, and sometimes shocking, it is well worth a visit.

Yvonne Lynch

For tour details tel: 0171-267 1959.



Nabil Shaban in Graeae's irreverent production

PATRICK BALDWIN

As I speculated last time, the last two programmes in the Channel 4 series *Inside Out* were less original than the first



three. Having said that, they were worth watching. *Whose School is it Anyway?* (C4, 11 December), gave more proof against segregated education. More? Well, the same ground has been covered in four programmes made by the BBC Disability Programmes Unit, *Old School Ties*, (BBC2, September 1995). Nevertheless, the points were well made and needed to be re-emphasised.

The last *Inside Out*, about disability comedy, was glossy and well presented. However, the topic of *Laugh? I Could Have Cried*, (18 December) had already been examined by *From the Edge*. All it did for me was confirm that the less politically correct comedians have the best style. I must add, though, that my experience of disability comedy is mainly confined to the tv screens, and some comedians do not travel well from live performances to a more impersonal medium.

Apart from an item on the *Holiday* programme (BBC1, 19 December) with Sue Cook acting as a sighted guide to a blind tourist, Christmas was barren of mainstream disability input. *Link* finished the year with an amusing look back at '95, and *See Hear* gave a well-deserved tribute to Clive Mason. The first *Link* of the New Year saw the welcome return of Rosalie Wilkins with the first series of European reports.

Channel 4 tried to kick the disability subject into the main agenda with an item occupying the whole of part two of *Right to Reply* (6 January). Although it could have been stronger, the intentions were well-meant, and it gives me an excuse to pick some salient points from the past year.

The wasted *Dangerfield* storyline sticks out, as does the so-called debate which turned out to be one-sided in *You Decide* with Jeremy Paxman (BBC1, August '95). Both of these were low points. The highlights include: *Circling the Dragon*, *The Invisible Wall*, *I'm Still a Tourist*, *Over the Edge: Freak Out*, *Old School Ties* and *Inside Out*.

This summer sees the tenth anniversary of this column. Has television improved its representation of disability since 1986? Let me know what you think.

Film

Michael Turner

You can't but feel sorry for Billy Hughes (Marina Sudina), star of *Mute Witness*.



As if the shock of a being a disabled person finding a job in the film industry wasn't enough, Billy witnesses a gruesome

murder at work and becomes a target for all sorts of heavies.

No explanation is offered for Billy's lack of speech, though her position as a special effects make-up artist on a low budget "slasher" film is a triumph of nepotism over equality – her brother-in-law is the director.

Mute Witness uses disability crudely. It explains how Billy becomes trapped in the studio, is used to undermine her credibility as a witness and simply renders her incapable of screaming.

But there is a lot that is positive. She uses American Sign Language, a speech-synthesiser to make phone calls, and goes through many of the frustrations experienced by people with impaired speech – such as her brother-in-law's repeated promises to learn sign language.

Billy is also a strong heroine. She keeps her wits about her



Marina Sudina as Billy Hughes

and eludes the killers in a fast paced chase. When they come looking for her later, she fights back fiercely and effectively.

Mute Witness's treatment of disability is good and bad. The film follows suit. It is fast-paced with suspense and humour, but the plot is too contrived.

Video top five

1. **BAD BOYS** (Columbia): Two cops in search of call girl killer.
2. **JUDGE DREDD** (Fox Guild): Sly Stallone stars as the cult comic character.
3. **DUMB AND DUMBER** (First Independent): Jim Carrey stars.

4. **MURIEL'S WEDDING** (Buena Vista): Aussie comedy.

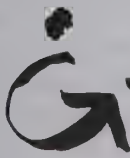


5. **BATMAN FOREVER** (Warner): Gothic goings on in Gotham.



Look out for

In Alliance, an art exhibition by six women, two disabled, at the Cafe Gallery in London until 22 February. Tel: 0171-739 9001.



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Newton's Karma is a folding aluminium chair, tel: 0121-783 6081

Ten years ago, a young woman colleague purchased the first Swede Champ I had seen. At the time, my boss used an 8BL "special", manufactured by Vessa and supplied through the DHSS. They were known as Beauty and the Beast, the chairs that is. The difference was like a pair of designer trainers versus school gym shoes.

At that time, the British wheelchair market was controlled by DHSS contracts. More than 90 per cent of all manual chairs issued in the UK were made to ministry designs and standards laid down about 20 years before.

They were rugged and utilitarian and, as a colleague who had recently toured Scandinavia remarked, "...ridiculed everywhere I went". *The Independent Review of*

Artificial Limb and Appliance Centres by Professor Ian McColl in 1986 recommended sweeping changes.

New, locally responsive NHS wheelchair providers would no longer be tied to national contracts but would be able to purchase any chair which met the needs of their customers.

But there was no new money to pay for the cost of imported chairs.

In America and other European countries, wheelchair design had kept pace with fashion and technological innovation. The first imports were hardly recognisable as wheelchairs and, in any case, were only for youngsters, maybe for basketball once a month. They were certainly not "...to meet the basic need for short-range mobility of people

Wheel yourself

Manual wheelchairs are changing rapidly. Rob Jackson explains why

of all ages who have serious and permanent difficulties in walking...", as McColl put it.

So what has been the effect, not just on NHS provision, but also on the private market, of allowing the new district wheelchair services to prescribe any wheelchair?

Private v public supply

In the private sector, prices have come down. Competition has squeezed profit margins on individual chairs to perhaps a third of what they were in 1986.

are adjustable: back-rest angle, foot-rest length, arm-rest height, different seat widths and lengths.

High-performance chairs may offer less adjustment for comfort and tend to be customised for individual requirements.

Hand grips are important. The beautiful, shiny stainless steel rims which felt so good to hold in the showroom may feel like dead bones on a frosty morning or after an hour of pushing. Your grip may be adequate to push over a flat, hard surface, but how good

going to use your chair, where it will be when not in use, if it must fit into a car, if you must push right up to a desk at work and, if so, whether the arm rests will get in the way. Also think about the narrowest doorway you have to go through.

Conventional chairs fold; sports and high-performance chairs can have rigid or folding frames.

Weight for weight, rigid frames are stronger and do not necessarily take up more space. They usually have quick-release removable wheels and maybe a fold-down seat back. Taking the wheels off lightens the load, so if you need to pull the chair into the car after you don't assume that a folding frame is what you need.

High performance? Sport and high-performance chairs are light, have high quality wheel bearings, may have high pressure tyres, cambered wheels and adjustable balance. They are equally at home in the office or in the high street.

The NHS 8L is described as lightweight, but it weighs around 18.14 kg (40lb). Really light begins at 13 kg and drops to a mere 7 kg (15lb) for a racer.

Cambering has two useful effects: it increases sideways stability for rapid cornering and it makes the propelling thrust more effective and comfortable by bringing the pushing rims in line with the arm and shoulder. Some chairs have variable camber; others can be set up with two fixed angles, easily interchangeable with quick release wheels.

Widening the chair by cambering the wheels may make it too wide to go through the door. On the other hand, you won't skin your knuckles on the door frame.

Fore and aft balance (or trim) affects manoeuvrability. Reducing weight on the small front wheels increases turning speed. Most high performance



Bradshaw's bowls buggy won't hurt the green, tel: (01275) 848070

There is also much more choice. There are highly specialised racers and sport-specific high-performance chairs, often with innovations coming from the athletes themselves. The Paralympics have stimulated huge advances in lightweight technology and manoeuvrability that have filtered down to other chairs.

All that has happened in NHS provision is that an "active user's" chair is available on national contract, but it costs twice as much as the standard 8L and most NHS wheelchair services do not prescribe it.

Yet a growing number of people are buying their own high-performance chair for daily use.

Although suppliers often employ expert advisers to ensure that customers are satisfied, the choice can be bewildering. Here are some pointers.

What to look for

Comfort. Being comfortable is more or less important depending on how long you sit in your chair. Give yourself plenty of time just to sit in the chair you fancy before committing yourself. Most conventional chairs

will it be up a ramp?

Large diameter rims may be easy to push, but how fast will they take you if you are in a hurry, or racing?

Pressure relief. If you can't feel parts of your body, you probably know all about pressure relief, but as a rough guide when trying an off-the-peg chair, make sure the back of your knee is four fingers width in front of the front edge of the seat and you can push your hand between your thighs and the front edge of the cushion you usually use with your feet on the foot rests.

Space. Consider where you are

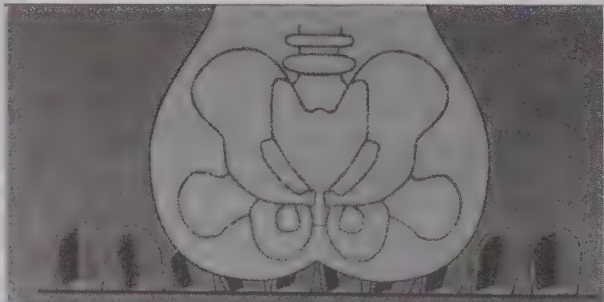


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into the future

his has happened and what you should be looking for in 1996



Athletes have often stimulated advances in lightweight technology and manoeuvrability (note cambering)

chairs have different axle positions and are adjustable. Up and down movement changes your centre of gravity and the tilt of the seat, so these adjustments alter stability and the position of the "balance point", which is when the chair and user stand on the large wheels.

Active users can perform amazing stunts using the balance point, but most off-the-peg high-performance chairs can be adjusted to be as stable as a conventional chair. High pressure tyres. These are designed to minimise friction, but punctures can be a real pain, and pumping up to 90psi with a standard cycle pump is an ordeal.

Green Tyre, tel: (01642) 223322, do a standard solid tyre equivalent to 68psi and will produce others to order. Carrying capacity. High performance chairs are very strong but they will not necessarily carry anyone. On the other hand, Action 2000LT, from Invacare Carters, tel: (01656) 647327, carries users up to 113 kg (17st 12lb), and the Remploy Roller "Rider", tel: (01670) 810868, up to 100 kg (16 st).

Help needed? Many high performance chairs have low backs, rudimentary or absent handles and can be very uncomfortable for a pusher. If you want extra back support, your choice is limited.

Price. There is of course a big difference in price. Conventional folding chairs cost from around £200; sports and high performance chairs £500-£2,000.

Where to get a chair

Most district wheelchair services only provide conventional chairs, but try yours again. Motability is not available for manual chairs—why not? The Employment Services PAC (Placing, Assessment and Counselling) teams used to be a source of high performance chairs in employment through the Access to Work scheme. But the policy has just been changed and it seems people already in

work will no longer be eligible.

The silly thing is that everyone I know with a high performance chair has an NHS chair at home. So it would make sense if the cost of the prescription could be available as a downpayment on a chair of your choice. I gather the Health Department is considering various options.

Rob Jackson is director of the Derbyshire Centre for Integrated Living.



Steps are nothing to Russell Simms in his Titan 2

Fancy wheelies?

Russell Simms, 30, descends escalators in department stores and goes down flights of stairs. He would give London Underground a run for its money, even if it meant removing the wheels to get through turnstiles.

It is all a matter of balance, he says.

Russell became paraplegic after a car accident. He met his business partner Greg Eden, 34, while playing wheelchair basketball. They had the idea of making made to measure chairs for everyday use.

That was seven years ago, when most sports chairs were imported from the USA. Now his company RGK Wheelchairs sells about 400 wheelchairs a year plus spare parts and employs eight other people.

"The advantages of a lightweight, easily manoeuvrable, responsive chair that gives a good posture can cross over from sports use to everyday use," he says.

Great potential...

"There are people still using older ministry issue, heavy, folding chairs who do not realise the benefits of using this kind of chair."

Others have the chair and don't realise how much more they could do.

"The most important skill is being able to balance in the wheely position just on the back wheels. You can be very independent in the chair. You don't need help up and down single steps.

"You can certainly go down a flight of steps unaided if you

have a sturdy handrail on one side and the confidence."

Climbing stairs is still impractical, though.

The company does not offer any training. Most people are self-taught. "I just try to make people aware of what they can do. They ultimately have to make their own choice."

...but take care

Jo Kavanagh, physiotherapist at the Banstead Mobility Centre, said only a minority of people could do these manoeuvres.

"There are lightweight wheelchairs on the market in which a very fit, competent user can manage stairs. But a wheelchair user should not contemplate it unless he's had a lot of practise and really feels confident and safe.

"A lot of less competent users could manage curbs, though."

However, Russell Simms believes that for many wheelchair users his type of chair increases potential. For a start, they are easy to put in a car.

The company produces nine models, from pure sports chairs to those combining sport with everyday uses. The Lazer model allows you to make adjustments as you discover its potential to meet your demands.

Prices, £1,000 to £2,000, are expensive. "I see it more as an investment in the quality of life," says Russell. He realises that as the manufacturer he would say that. "But I think the value for money is very good."

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An unwelcome addition?

Ever wondered what all those “E” numbers mean? Alison Miller finds that a better knowledge of what is added to our food could help parents of hyperactive children.

“The other night I gave Ewan a glass of ribena and he was up at two o’clock in the morning wanting to play games.”

The link between these two events may not be immediately obvious, but Denise Parsons believes her four-year-old son’s behaviour is directly related to the foods he eats.

Ewan is one of hundreds of children in this country who show signs of being hyperactive and whose temper tantrums, lack of concentration and learning difficulties appear to be dramatically improved by a change in their diet.

The most commonly named cause of the symptoms is food additives.

All sorts of substances – natural and unnatural – are added to our food to make it taste better, look more appealing or stay fresh longer.

For most people there is little evidence that any of these substances cause harmful side-effects. Most are tested for their safety and the results are assessed by the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment. When they are deemed safe they are given a number. The “E” before that number means that it has been accepted as harmless by the



Gillian Western (right) with her son Piers (centre), whose behaviour as a child was dramatically improved by changing his diet

European Community.

But some pressure groups and scientists feel the methods of testing are inadequate. Although an additive may be declared “safe” in that it will not poison you, it may have a more subtle effect on the body. According to Sally Bunday from the Hyperactive Children’s Support Group: “Things are tested for their toxicity but not tested for their

behavioural effect.” A cocktail effect is not tested either.

Allergic reaction

Children who seem to react to additives often have a history of allergies. According to Sally Bunday, children often have this condition alongside other disabilities such as Down’s syndrome and autism.

From her experience, most children will see some improvement if they change the food they eat.

In the second of two studies in 1992, Dr Neil Ward of Surrey University tested the effects of additives on 43 children who were known to be hyperactive and 43 children without the condition.

The research covered the link between additives and a lack of essential fatty acids and trace minerals in the body.

He looked specifically at the effects of tartrazine (E102), an artificial colour often added to

orange squash, and found the results were pretty consistent.

“The children who reacted were found to be considerably lower in trace minerals, particularly zinc.”

The effect additives have on the body’s ability to absorb zinc seems to be a major factor.

According to Dr Ward, zinc controls aggression and depression – important aspects of a hyperactive child’s behaviour. If levels of zinc are low, a child could, in theory, develop behavioural problems.

In 1994 Dr Ward tested the effects of combining tartrazine and zinc in the laboratory. He found that a chemical reaction takes place. Tartrazine binds up zinc in the test tube. If a similar reaction takes place in the body, children could be unable to use zinc when they have consumed certain chemical additives.

Anecdotal evidence

Gillian Western is a parent who believes there is such a lot of anecdotal evidence it cannot be ignored. Her son Piers has just graduated with a degree in law. But as a child he had severe educational problems because of an inability to concentrate.

She changed her son’s diet and saw an immediate improvement in his behaviour. “I started reading labels and making sure everything was in its natural state. My son’s behaviour improved.”

There was also an improvement in Piers’ health. “He had a history of infections. These all cleared up.” Thirdly, Gillian saw a dramatic change at school. All our problems evaporated just by switching his diet.”

Since then, Gillian has advised other parents with similar problems. Most, she says, have

also seen improvements in their children’s behaviour.

Where can I get advice?

So what can parents do if they think their children are affected by additives? The first thing is to get advice.

The Hyperactive Children’s Support Group will help with information about which additives are known to cause a reaction in some children. The Government has produced a pamphlet called *About Food Additives*, which gives basic information about the subject. Some supermarkets will also supply lists of products which are additive free. Libraries will also have books on additives. Always consult your doctor before changing your diet.

It should be remembered that additives are also present in other children’s products – not just food. Watch out for artificial colours and flavourings in children’s medicines and toothpaste. These do not have to follow the same labelling regulations as food. It may be necessary to contact the manufacturers to find out what additives they contain.

The Government could do more to publicise the issues around additives, thinks Gillian Western. “The problem up till now has been getting them to accept it. The Government hasn’t paid for any research.”



This Government leaflet contains basic information

The Hyperactive Children’s Support Group had a meeting with the Conservative MP Angela Browning last October to present the evidence they had found. Her response was positive and they are hoping for a change in attitude as well as funding for more research. But Sally Bunday admits: “It’s still an on-going battle. I don’t think it’s one that will be won easily.”

Hyperactive Children’s Support Group, Mayfield House, Yaptown Road, Barnham, West Sussex PO22 0BJ.

About Food Additives, tel: (0645) 556000.

Additives: your complete survival guide, £3.95, published by Century Hutchison Ltd. From bookshops.

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DN2/96

Moving Forward – the guide to living with spinal cord injury

by Mike Gatehouse
£0.50, The Spinal Injuries Association, 76 St James Lane, London N10 3DF.

Comparatively few people are born disabled or become disabled during childhood. For most, the onset of disability is gradual, but for some it is sudden and traumatic. People who become disabled need a great deal of information, that is often difficult to obtain. People with spinal cord injury now have a gold mine from which they can extract rich nuggets. *Moving Forward* is a heavy publication and some might find difficulty lifting it. It is contained within a ring binder, with loose leaf pages that can be removed for easy reference. The print size is smaller than some would like, but perfectly adequate for those who are not visually impaired. The style is readable and practical. It is above all a guide to independent living, self-reliance and dignity, including covering personal assistance. The opinions of the association are clearly indicated.

The second part of the guide is devoted to issues disabled people face if they live in the community. Sections are devoted to housing, aids and equipment, mobility and access, motoring, employment, sport and leisure and holidays. Although this guide was written specifically for people with spinal cord injury, it would be invaluable to most disabled people and is an indispensable publication for any organisation which offers an information service. There are many information guides around. This one ranks as amongst the best.

Bert Massie

Bert Massie is director of the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation.

Book news

DN motoring correspondent David Griffiths has written a new guide for disabled drivers. *Adaptations for the Disabled Driver* outlines the basic types of driver adaptations available and how they operate. £1.50, The Mobility Information Service, National Mobility Centre, Unit 2A, Atcham Estate, Shrewsbury SY4 4UG.

The civil rights debate in the workplace comes under scrutiny in Brian Doyle's *Disability, Discrimination and Equal Opportunities: a comparative study of the employment rights of disabled people*. £20, Mansell Publishing. From bookshops.

DN's cartoonist Crippen has published a collection of his work, entitled *The Thoughts of Chairman Crippen*. The booklet covers his views on disability, the Disability Discrimination Act and perceptions of disability. £4.99, from 11A Cleveland Avenue, Lupset Park, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF2 8LE.

"Don't worry Christopher, now you can play a role the public will really relate to – Supercrip!"



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DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick can give disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psycho-therapeutic counsellor and fully accredited Methodist local preacher. Talk to her on (01708) 477582 on Thursday afternoons, 1pm-5pm and Mondays 6pm-10pm.



Sponsored by BT

Send your letters to: Ann Darnbrough, *Disability Now*, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ

Dear Ann,

I am 45 and I have never held a woman in my arms. I like women, but they feel/want nothing to do with me. How do I find a woman who will say 'I love you, just the way you are'?

I have not got a lover, and I don't think I want one now. After all, women have, it seems to me, got life going for them. They breed and if they do not like the man, they kick him out as soon as he has made them pregnant.

All the time, men are being told we are no good. We can come in, do the job and then we are kicked out. All I would like to have is someone to talk to, someone to comfort me, be there when I need them. Not for

sex, but for friendship, love and companionship.

I have gone a long way to meet women in the past, only to be rejected. What can I do?

Peter, Cornwall

I can only say, keep on trying, Peter, however hard it seems. The day before you find the right companion can seem as hopeless as ever, but then this new person suddenly comes into your life and the blues of yesterday are forgotten in the joys of all the tomorrows.

For some people, personal advertisements are an answer. *Disability Now* runs a "personal" column, each entry for which costs just £3 (see the classified section for

details). Also, there is the "Kindred Spirits" section on Fridays in *The Daily Telegraph*. To place an advertisement, tel (0660) 600660. At the same time as placing the advertisement, you will be asked to record a message. You only pay for the cost of a telephone call (at premium rates unfortunately), the rest is free. You can also listen or respond to other messages.

Dear Ann,

I wonder if other readers are as confused as I am about alternative therapies? There are so many to choose from – and that's the problem.

They all claim to be holistic, each, apparently, taking into

only to find that the miracle cure is not for me.

I've even tried an exclusion diet – where you start off with a diet so restricted that a sparrow would scoff, and then slowly introduce new items of food until you spot the culprit causing the allergy.

Is my trouble lack of faith? Having been, sometime back, a true believer in the so-called New Age philosophy, I am now a born again sceptic. But I would like to know readers' experiences with therapies that have worked for them.

Gina, Portsmouth

Me too, me too, Gina. I rather think that that great complementary therapist in the sky has it in for me. The magical cures haven't worked for me either, and I find the choices confusing. As for scepticism, doubt is my middle name!

My concerns were first fuelled by an article by Sally Wheale in *The Guardian* in November 1993. She highlighted the importance of making sure that any practitioner you intend to consult has received training and is licensed to practice.

Not everyone realises that anyone can set up in practice without necessarily having much knowledge of the field. One of the dangers is that a person may abandon conventional treatment to follow the advice of an inadequately trained person.

If you have any doubts as to who to consult, the British Complementary Medicine Association will be able to advise you. They are open

Monday to Thursday 10.30am-4pm, tel: (01242) 230100.

Another option, again, is this newspaper! Last year, *DN* ran a series of articles (12 in all) on different complementary therapies, everything from acupuncture to cranio-sacral massage, including experiences of disabled people who had tried them, which disabilities they helped and the best organisations to go to.

They have now been collected together and are available, for only £2, by writing to *DN* at 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 2EQ. Cheques should be made payable to *Disability Now*.

Dear Ann,

I've decided that I want to go on a really adventurous expedition abroad this year. Although I'm disabled, I know I've got a lot to offer, not least enthusiasm. I just need a little bit of extra help. Any suggestions?

Marion, Malvern

A Disabled Explorer Conference was held in October, Marion, at the Royal Geographic Society (RGS), which helped to raise the profile of this issue.

Organised by McIntyre Adventures, its aim was to promote the integration of disabled people in adventure activities.

The Expeditionary Centre at the RGS provides information and training to anyone undertaking an adventure trip, tel: 0171-581 2057.

McIntyre Adventures, tel: (01908) 230100, is glad to advise on adventurous expeditions and is itself organising an expedition to Argentina in November climbing Aconcagua, the highest mountain in the southern hemisphere. The cost is £3,800. If you are interested, contact Andrea Inman as soon as possible.

Have faith in romance

Ah, it's Valentine's Day again soon. Will you be sending a Valentine's card? I always enjoy the romantic notions that Valentine's Day conjures up.

I'm sure there's a lot more romance around than many people will admit.

Reading about Raymond

Chandler's feeling for his wife the other day quite restored my faith in human nature.

"She was the beat of my heart for thirty years. She was the music heard faintly at the edge of sound...For thirty years, ten months and four days, she was the light of my life, my whole

ambition. Anything else I did was just the fire for her to warm her hands at."

He went on to add that he had never been unfaithful because he had already found perfection.

But for some people, and especially many disabled people like Peter (*above*), love is a very different experience.

accounts all our needs, but how can this be? From aromatherapy to reflexology, every one of them promises to solve our problems.

So how can I choose the best one to cure my headaches, allergies and other aches and pains? How do I know if the treatment works or, even more importantly, if it is safe?

Having been recommended by friends, I have hopefully trotted off to a number of therapists,

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The service features: *News, Directories, Job Vacancies, Factsheets, Travel information, a Motoring section and Online shopping.*

The information provided on the service is relevant to both the general public and care professionals.

To take a look at **Disabilities Access**,

point your Web browser at the URL: <http://www.healthworks.co.uk/>

If you would like to promote your organisation, products or services on Disabilities Access contact Steve McCann on 0113 234 6624 or E-mail us on: info@d-access.demon.co.uk

Healthworks

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**Got a problem to air?
Need advice or just a
sympathetic ear? Then
write to Ann at *Disability
Now*, 12 Park Crescent,
London W1N 4EQ.
She's here to help.
Letters may be edited.**

Your stars

By *DN's* astrologer Marion Stanton



* Virgo *

24 August-23 September
Saturn will soon be leaving your opposite sign, relieving you of tension, but things may still feel a bit strained in February.

* Libra *

24 September-23 October
Venus in your opposite sign could put a strain on your love life. You might do better to concentrate on affairs of the head.

* Scorpio *

24 October-22 November
A romantic start to the month could give way to difficult communications, but the problems should soon pass.

* Sagittarius *

23 November-21 December
The Moon in your sign conjuncts Pluto on the 13th. This will cause you to examine your feelings. Think carefully before making long-term decisions.

* Capricorn *

22 December-20 January
Now that Uranus has left your sign, your dreams should be less disruptive. The first half of February is a good time to communicate your ideas.

* Aries *

21 March-20 April
Your ruling planet, Mars, moving into Pisces this month softens you, but beware of confusion. The Venus/Moon conjunction on the 21st could set the wheels of romance in motion.

* Taurus *

21 April-21 May
The pressure is off now that Pluto has left Scorpio. There is opportunity to develop new ideas to the benefit of others as well as yourself. Tension around the 23rd should soon pass.

* Gemini *

22 May-22 June
Pluto should be making itself felt in your life by now. Power struggles may occur as you are becoming used to the new intense period. You may find yourself doing a lot of soul searching around the 10th.

* Cancer *

23 June-July 23
The Moon opposes Jupiter then Neptune around the 2nd. Good ideas might turn out to be castles in the air, but careful thinking could bring them down to earth where they are useful.

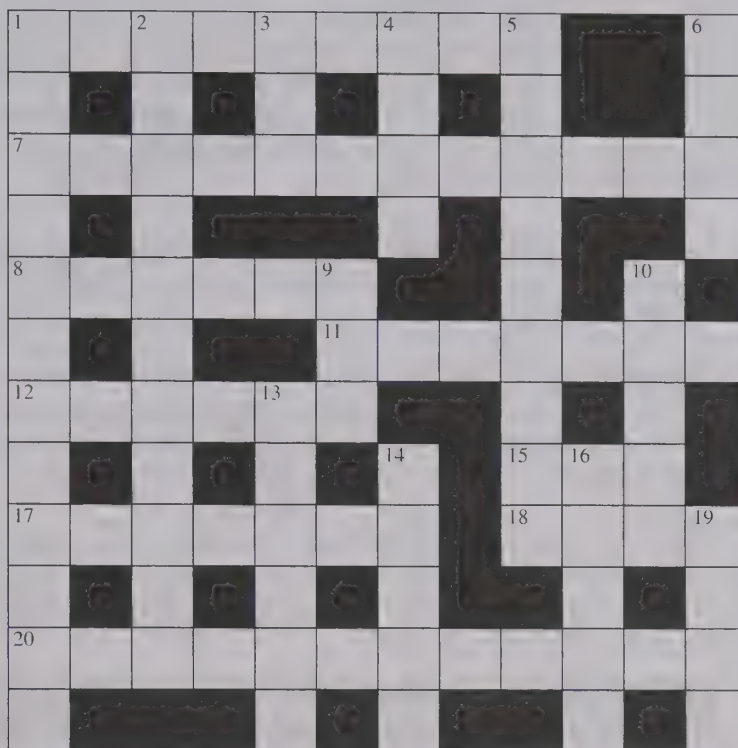
* Leo *

24 July-23 August
The full moon in Leo opposing Uranus might make you feel the need to make sudden, dramatic changes in your life. Don't be in a hurry as the influence of Uranus bringing change will be around for a few years.

DN's crossword

Answers on page 32

COMPILED BY REBECCA REYNOLDS



ACROSS

- MP campaigner for disability rights (9)
- US Halloween tradition (5,2,5)
- Gas (6)
- Lent age (anag)
- Coloured (6)
- Playing card (3)
- Sled pea (anag)
- To smell or push ahead (4)
- Secret meetings (12)

DOWN

- School Christmas show (8,4)
- Animals closest to humans on evolutionary scale (11)
- Type of wood (3)
- Definite (4)
- Wood (in Beatles song) (9)
- Swear word (4)
- Left-wing colour (3)
- Mountain range (5)
- Flag (6)
- Perfect (5)
- Part of stomach or punctuation (5)
- Direction (4)

We've got it taped!

Do you know someone who would like *DN* on tape? It's free! Contact Wray Norton on 0171-383 4575 for more information.

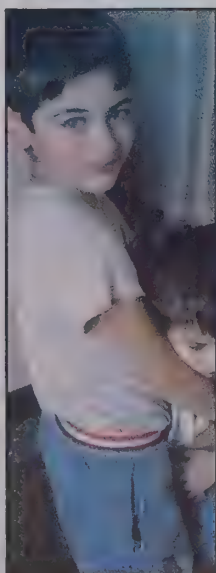
Trivia questions

Answers on page 32

- What children's tv series is about a family of penguins?
- King Juan Carlos is the monarch of which country?
- What is the French word for potato?
- The Rover's Return is on which famous street?

- Name the artist whose most famous work can be seen in the Sistine Chapel.
- What is Lapsang Souchong?
- Who wrote *The Wasteland*?
- What does RNIB stand for?
- Name Mickey Mouse's girlfriend.
- After Oxford and Cambridge, which is the oldest university in England?

In your DN next month



• Come the Easter holidays, how about a short break? *DN* has ideas and information.

• We join up with RICA (Research Institute for Consumer Affairs) to launch a pioneering Consumer Clinic. Readers with equipment or service problems can have them checked out by RICA. First: a defective walking frame?

• Spruce up for spring and turn your pad into a palace. We show you how.

• Tanya Faludy talks about her son Alexander (left, aged six) who, now 12, has helped her write a book about his experience of dyslexia.

On sale in newsagents and Sainsbury - we are assured - from 28 February.

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London W1N 4EQ.
Cheques should be made payable to *Disability Now*.

Info

Mailout is a national magazine for anyone interested in the arts. It covers a range of topics including mainstream, disability, black and urban arts. To subscribe contact National Office, 9 Chapel Street, Holywell Green, Halifax HX4 9AY, tel: (01422) 310161.

The Winslow 1996 catalogue contains a wide range of therapy and activity materials including games and books. Useful for health care professionals. Free from Lyn Smith, Winslow Press Ltd, Telford Road, Bicester, Oxon OX6 0TS, tel: (01869) 244644.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme have produced a *Newsletter Production Pack* for youth groups. It includes information on budgeting, editing and artwork. £3.50 from The Award Scheme Ltd, 69 Dublin Street, Edinburgh EH3 6NS.

Saving VAT for Charities is a guide that aims to demystify the VAT regime for charities and show where savings could be made. Free copies available from National Marketing Department, Kidsons Impey, Spectrum House, 20-26 Cursitor Street, London EC4A 1HY, tel: 0171-334 4778.

The Diversity Directory profiles 102 trainers and their work. Contact Mary Gray, Diversity UK, 3 Abbey Square, Turvey, Bedford, Beds MK43 8DJ, tel: (01234) 881380.

The National Information Forum has a new address. They can now be contacted at Post Point 228, BT Proctor House, 100-110 High Holborn, London WC1V 6LD.

- TRIVIA QUIZ ANSWERS
1. Pingu
 2. Spain
 3. Pomme de terre
 4. Coronation Street
 5. Michelangelo
 6. A type of tea
 7. T S Eliot
 8. Royal National Institute for the Blind
 9. Minnie Mouse
 10. Durham

What's on

An exhibition for and about visitors with disabilities at the Science Museum in London. See Me! includes items from the museum's collection plus works by disabled children and runs until 30 June. It has braille labelling, clearer explanation panels and more accessible positioning of exhibits. Science Museum, Exhibition Road, South Kensington, London SW7 2DD, tel: 0171-938 8008/8080, minicom: 0171-938 9770.

A one-day course teaching the basics of Boccia, a Paralympic sport similar to bowls on 10 February in Lewes, East Sussex. For more information tel: 01323-846029.

The Way Forward, a one day conference on the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act organised by the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation at the London Hilton on 14 February. For details contact Sue Wallis tel: 0171-250 3222.

Caring and Coping with Incontinence at Disabled Living, Redbank House, 4 St Chad's Street, Cheetham, Manchester M8 8QA on 29 February. This is a conference for carers. For details contact Christine Flanagan, tel: 0161-834 2001.

Personal

MALE, 52 living in the north Midlands, in need of female company for friendship, and mutual tender loving care hopefully leading to romance. All letters answered and any photographs returned. Box No. 863

38-YEAR-OLD MAN, with slight memory problem. Widower. Interests include art, dogs, camping and exploring the countryside in my Morris Minor. I'm looking for a navigator lady 25-40 with sense of humour and romantic nature. Box No. 864

48-YEAR-OLD able bodied male looking for a lady in need of tender loving care. Age, colour, religion, politics, able bodied or disabled are far less important than sincerity. All replies will be answered. Box No. 865

30-YEAR-OLD female, married, would like pen pal. Likes writing and music. Box No. 866

ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT MAN, 36, slightly disabled. Successful professional, sensitive, funny, generally happy and fulfilled, but still looking for a loving, caring disabled woman (25-45) to build a relationship. Photo if possible. I'm London based but mobile. Box No. 867

EAST LONDON LADY 51, hip disability so can't walk far, looking for male 48-54 to help me get about and enjoy lunches, meals out, cinema, holidays abroad, chatting. As I am rather short he shouldn't be too tall and must be a non-smoker. Box No. 868

FUN-LOVING, 30-year-old disabled man looking to meet open-minded 20-something woman. My interests are music, cinema and socialising. I live in London but would welcome replies from anywhere! Box No. 869

INDIAN MALE AGE 33. Able bodied. Wishes to meet kind, caring and understanding mature female (disability no problem) for long-term friendship and meaningful relationship, with a view to marriage. I live in London, 5ft 3in tall and have very good sense of humour. Age and race and colour not important. Box No. 870

GAY GUY, YOUNG 40, slightly disabled but fully mobile. Would like to meet other disabled guys for friendship, hopefully long-term. I'm very caring, sharing, outgoing and friendly. Love music, travel, socialising and more. Very genuine. Write soon! Thanks. Box No. 871

For sale

VESSA MOTORISED WHEELCHAIR, working order, £275. Tel: Aldershot 317950.

CRUISER 2E WHEELCHAIR, recently serviced. Four years old. Hardly used. Battery charger and kerb climbers included. £600 ono. Tel: (answer machine) 0181-995 5229 (day or night).

STERLING XL MODEL three wheel mobility scooter. As new. In perfect condition. Battery operated with charger, pump and weather cover. Cost £2,185. Will sell for £1,400.

VAUXHALL ASTRA, AUTO 1.3, 1986, sky blue metallic, power steering, conversion for paraplegic by Knight. Three doors. Hand controls. Power driver's seat on runners for side transfer. Hoist. 9,000 miles. £1,800. Tel: (01634) 231756. Only one owner from new.

FORD ESCORT 1.4. Mileage 57,000. Lowering system. Tax and MOT 1996. Colour blue. Inside facing seat. Very good condition. £6,250 ono. Tel: (01734) 311894 (after 7pm).

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SEAT VISTA CHAIRMAN, petrol 1991 Reg. 27,000 miles. Rear entry ramp, wheelchair securing system, MOT and excellent condition body. £4,200 ono. Tel: CR Fuller 0171-586 4968.

BEC STERLING three wheel scooter with charger and basket. £550 ono. Tel: (01204) 405539 (Bolton).

ADJUSTAMATIC BED with cyclo massage. Auto variable and cot sides. As new. Only £11,750. Tel: (01273) 895412.

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NISSAN PRAIRIE 1.8SGL. Brotherwood conversion wheelchair. Accessible car. 1989 F Reg. 46,000 miles. New MOT. Colour red. Also includes carchair front passenger wheelchair system. All excellent condition. £9,000. Tel: (01803) 812260 (Devon).

POWERTEC F40 ELECTRIC wheelchair. 16in frame. Dual control, kerb climber, battery charger etc. Unused due to death. Cost £2,852 new. £2,200 ono. Tel: 0161-775 3285.

ONE YEAR OLD Lark Classic plus electric wheelchair in perfect working order. Twin batteries. Sliding joystick control. Kerb climbers and compact charger. Dismantles easily to fit car boot. £1,100. Tel daytime: (01162) 478737, evenings: (01858) 880417.

SIDHILCARE NURSING BED, white, electric raiser castors, brakes, immaculate. Tel: (01617) 778042.

FORD ESCORT CHAIRMAN Elite 1989. Wheelchair passenger access via folding ramp. 23,900 miles. Service history. Excellent condition. £5,995. Tel: 0181-207 1330.

ELECTRIC SCOOTER, Ortho-kinetics. Type Lark 4. Brand new with lights, batteries and charger. New £2,400. Accept £1,500 ono. Tel: (01737) 552362.

RENAULT EXTRA FREEDOM 1989. White. Easy access by automatic lowering of rear suspension. Designed to carry wheelchair passenger. In excellent condition. £4,850. Tel: (01494) 447496.

MANGAR ELK EMERGENCY lifting cushion plus small portable compressor. Seven months old. £600 ono. Tel: (01322) 521338 (Bexleyheath).

1994 SHORT WHEELBASE semi high petrol 2 litre Ford Transit. Power steering. 6,000 miles. New condition. Ricon tail lift. Two rotating seats. Second battery 240V. 12V charging. Carries three wheelchairs any position. £11,500 ono.

SCOOTER DISCOVERY FOUR. Latest model with accessories. Cost £690. Full guarantee. Never used due to death. £1,250 ono. Tel: (01704) 873322.

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F REG RED auto transit van. Steering developments. Three way joystick (steering plus braking). Electric accelerator plus gear change. 1.9 way beeper system. Drive from wheelchair or normal drive. Passenger plus driver wheelchair clamping. Remote control side lift. £10,000 ono. Tel: (01425) 621430.

THREE WHEEL SCOOTER Sunrunner model. Four months old. Condition as new. Will accept £750 ono. Tel: (01902) 730326.

DURHAM MOTORISED RECLINER. New, not used due to bereavement. Offers in range £595-650 or nearest offer. Original price £1,000. Tel: 0171-720 0021.

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CROSSWORD ANSWERS

- ACROSS: 1. Nicholson
7. Trick or treat 8. Vapour
11. Elegant 12. Tinted
15. Ace 17. Pleased 18. Nose
20. Assignations
DOWN: 1. Nativity play
2. Chimpanzees 3. Oak
4. Sure 5. Norwegian 6.
Oath 9. Red 10. Andes 13.
Ensign 14. Ideal 16. Colon
19. East

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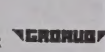


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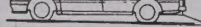
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Recruitment

BIBINI CENTRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Bibini Centre for Young People is a registered charity established in 1993 with the principal objective of providing appropriate, holistic residential care and support services predominantly for Black children and young people of African, Asian and Caribbean descent in and around the Manchester region. The Centre, currently under construction, will open in Summer 1996. We seek to appoint, at the earliest opportunity, an

Administrator/Finance Manager

who will undertake all administrative work including financial management, setting up PAYE and other administrative systems, contracts with local authorities, development of IT systems, etc.

Administrator/Finance Manager Grade 8, Scale Point 34 to 37 (NJC) £19,260 to £27,480 Ref. A/1/96

This is a key role within the organisation and the person appointed will have excellent financial management and administrative skills, together with extensive information technology expertise.

We are committed to employing disabled people and support requirements will be met. Information is available in large print/tape - please specify.

Further information and application forms from: The Bibini Centre for Young People, based at: **Church of God of Prophecy, 300 Moss Lane East, Moss Side, Manchester M14 4LZ. Tel. 0161 226 9122.** Please state post title and Ref. Number.

Closing date for receipt of applications is 14th February. (Interviews will be held on 22nd February).



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RIGHTS SUPPORT WORKER

Salary: NJC Scale S01 £16,575 - £17,667

DIAL UK is the national organisation for a network of advice centres run by and for disabled people. We are seeking an experienced Welfare Rights Worker with personal experience of disability to provide information, telephone support and some training to advice workers in DIAL disability advice centres across the UK. This post is part of a three-year project funded by the National Lottery Charities Board.

For a job application pack please contact the Director, DIAL UK, Park Lodge, St. Catherine's Hospital, Tickhill Road, Doncaster DN4 8QN Tel: (01302) 310123

This post is open only to people with disabilities.

Closing date: 29 Feb 1996

Interviews: 14 March 1996

We will discriminate... but only on ability!

Too often, people are labelled on how they appear and not on what they can achieve. These are labels of ignorance which can lead to unfair or unlawful discrimination.

At Salford City Council, we are committed to equality of opportunity and will discriminate only on your ability to do the job. So if you feel you could do a job we advertise, whether full time or job share, apply!

If you would like details of current vacancies, contact the Director of Personnel Services, Salford Civic Centre, Chorley Road, Swinton, Salford M27 2BN, tel. 0161 793 3507 (answerphone service after office hours). Minicom 0161 793 2544 (hearing impaired applicants only).

Please quote ref DNI in
all communications.

Salford
City of



JIGSAW
Partnerships
DISABILITY
TRAINING - RIGHTS - EMPLOYMENT

JIGSAW PARTNERSHIPS

Youth & Community Worker/Trainer

- JNC Range 3, Pt. 1-4 (£19,179 to £20,892 p.a.)

Three year innovative project delivering disability awareness, rights and assertiveness training, aiming to empower disabled children and young people to take a central role in developing equal access to services.

We want a qualified youth and community worker, experienced in disability issues and training.

APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FROM DISABLED PEOPLE ONLY

Further information contact:

Mark Wiggan, Jigsaw Partnerships, Trinity Youth & Community Centre, Wesleyan Row, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 2JY.

Telephone: 01200 27886.

Jigsaw Partnerships supported by the Lancashire Youth & Community Service is an equal opportunities employer. We particularly welcome applications from women, from black and minority ethnic communities. This post is part funded by BBC Children in Need. Charity Reg - Methodist Church Act 1976 - Statutory Instrument 1963 No. 2074

Recruitment

THE MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY

The Multiple Sclerosis Society is the largest national organisation dedicated to supporting people living with MS.

The Multiple Sclerosis Society is recruiting volunteers to expand its National Telephone Helpline Service.

Volunteers must have good communication skills and understand Statutory, Social and Health services. Computer skills are desirable.

Flexible working hours (include evenings). Reasonable travel and expenses met.

For details contact

Joy or Briony on 0171 371 8000, or The Multiple Sclerosis Society, 25 Effie Road, Fulham SW6 1EE

Reg. Charity No. 207495

Recruitment

Scope (formerly The Spastics Society) is the UK's largest charity working with disabled people. We exist to enable men, women and children with cerebral palsy and associated disabilities to claim their rights, lead full and rewarding lives and play a full part in society.

Campaigns Officer

(Parliamentary Affairs)

Starting salary £20,633 (inc ILW) Scale 8

Scope takes a leading role in briefing Parliamentarians of all parties on legislative and other issues affecting disabled people. The successful applicant will have substantial experience of parliamentary affairs and be able to demonstrate understanding of issues affecting disabled people's lives; a commitment to equal rights for disabled people is essential.

Educated to degree standard, you should have good analytical skills and be able to assimilate and express facts and arguments concisely.

Further details and an application form can be obtained from Fola Bakare, Campaigns Department, Scope, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ, tel: 0171 636 5020 ext. 231, fax: 0171 436 4437.

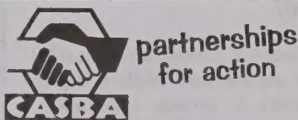
Closing date for applications:
Monday 12 February 1996.

Only successful applicants will
be contacted.

*We are committed to equal
opportunities.*



Charity No. 208231



Project Worker

(Monyhull) (2 posts)
3 year fixed term appointment

An exciting opportunity for an experienced person to play a central role in developing a new project to provide advocacy for people with learning difficulties living at Monyhull Hospital.

Monyhull is designated to close in the next 3 years and you will assist people living there to participate at all levels in their resettlement into the community. This will involve assisting them to gain access to information, make their views and choices known and to be involved in making decisions about their future.

You will need to demonstrate a commitment to equal rights and opportunities for people with learning difficulties, good communication skills, the ability to work under pressure, as part of a team and on own initiative and a willingness to adapt and learn.

CASBA is working towards being an equal opportunities employer. We welcome applications from all sections of the community and particularly from disabled people.

Salary scale 6 £14,943 to £15,942 pro rata for 28 hour week.
Closing date 17th February 1996.

Full details and application form from:

Dennis Neville, Co-ordinator, Citizen Advocacy South Birmingham Area,
St Laurence Pastoral Centre, 173 Church Road, Northfield, Birmingham B31 2LX
Telephone: 0121 475 0777 (24 hour Ansaphone available)

Registered Charity Number 701365 (This post is funded by Birmingham City Council)

HACT SEEKS NEW TRUSTEES



HACT is a specialist national grant-making charity, supporting the work of the voluntary housing sector throughout the UK. The Trust encourages the development of new ideas and good practice in housing provision, at local and national level. HACT commits over £1 million each year to 250 projects and gives extensive fundraising advice. The Trust is not involved in direct housing provision.

HACT is now seeking three new Trustees with expertise and skills in:

either **SPECIAL NEEDS AND SUPPORTED HOUSING**
or **FUNDRAISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

We are interested in encouraging applications from people throughout the UK and particularly from the West/South West of England. People with disabilities and people from black and minority ethnic communities are particularly welcome to apply.

HACT Trustees are unpaid, although actual expenses are reimbursed.

HACT is working to achieve equal opportunity in all aspects of its activities.

For an information pack, please contact Keren Wiltshire, HACT, Yeoman House, 168-172 Old Street, London EC1V 9BP (Tel: 0171 336 7774).

For an informal chat, please contact Vivien Knibbs,
HACT'S Director.

Registered Charity Number: 256160.



Personals

48-YEAR-OLD MALE in wheelchair is looking for a patient female in her 30s/40s for going out, friendship and hopefully more. Box No. 860

JUST ARRIVED. I am a 19-year-old disabled girl. I have returned to England after graduating from High School in USA and I want to meet new friends in north London and east Herts. Box No. 861

MALE 34-YEARS-OLD who has hydrocephalus, seeks younger male with learning difficulties, who's interested in sport. Box No. 862

Position wanted

FULLY QUALIFIED CARER seeks permanent post with disabled person in south west London. Hours/pay negotiable. Tel: 0881-108762 (answerphone).

ME Association

DIRECTOR

Salary £25K/plus Pension Package/plus Company Car (Ford Mondeo).

The position will be based in the Association's HQ at Stanford le Hope, Essex, which is easily accessible from London and the South Eastern Counties.

This is an outstanding opportunity for a dynamic, well-qualified and highly motivated individual to influence the future strategy and growth of this long established Medical/Health Charity.

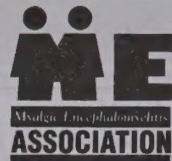
The successful applicant will have proven skills in operational and financial management and the ability to develop effective administrative procedures and strategies. They will also have a record of success in fundraising and PR and an awareness of the problems caused by chronic ill-health and disability.

Reporting to and working closely with the Chair and key Trustees, the overall brief will be to expand the work of the Association and take it into the millennium and beyond as a dynamic and respected source of information, education and support and advocacy for its membership.

For a job description and application form, please apply to Mrs M. Hume, Chair, (Ref. DN), ME Association, Stanhope House, High Street, Stanford le Hope, Essex SS17 0HA, enclosing A4 sae.

Closing date: 21 February 1996
Interviews: Early March

Registered Charity No. 801279



Armley Resource Centre
Armley Grange Drive
LEEDS
LS12 3QH

Tel/Minicom: 0113 2310428
Fax: 0113 2310604

OUTREACH WORKER

(37 hours per week. £11,538-£13,584/£14,472)

This Post is Open to Disabled People Only

The aim of the centre is to provide support and resources for disabled people and to create a situation where disabled people can be empowered to have greater control and choice. The centre offers a wide range of resources for young disabled people with physical impairments. These include workshops and groups on disability issues, arts and lifeskills. The centre is also developing new services such as peer support as it moves towards changing into a Centre for Integrated Living.

The main roles of the outreach worker are to:

- ★ Liaise with external agencies and individuals.
- ★ Develop and promote the centres aims and objectives.
- ★ Act as a first point of contact for potential users of the service.

You will have:

- ★ Good communication skills.
- ★ Effective management of own workload and time management.
- ★ A strong commitment to Equal Opportunities and anti oppressive practice.

Closing date for applications – 19th February

For further information or to arrange a visit contact Mick Ward at A.R.C.
A.R.C. is part of Leeds City Council and is allied to the disabled peoples movement.



WILTSHIRE USERS' NETWORK
requires a

PROJECTS MANAGER

from April (for a year in the first instance)
Salary £19,659 – 37 hours a week

For this senior appointment in our independent user-controlled organisation you will ideally be a disabled person or a long-term user of services with management experience and have worked for a user-controlled organisation.

You will be responsible for line-managing our 5 projects in the areas of Independent Living, Information, Empowerment and Participation, involving people with physical impairments, survivors of the psychiatric service and parents using child care services.

You will supervise 8 of our 20 staff, support the projects developmentally and operationally and report directly to the Network Convenor. Office base in Devizes.

For an application pack write to:

**The Convenor, Wiltshire Users' Network, 7 Prince Maurice Court,
Hambleton Avenue, Devizes SN10 2RT**

Closing date for applications: 21st February 1996.
We are striving to be an Equal Opportunities Employer.



Spinal Injuries Association WELFARE RIGHTS OFFICER

SIA, the leading national organisation of spinal cord injured people, is seeking a skilled practitioner in the field of welfare and legal rights to join its new Services Directorate. The post-holder will be responsible for dealing with enquiries from SIA members and others on community care, independent living, benefits, and other welfare and legal rights issues.

Minimum two year's previous experience of work in welfare rights essential as is the ability to work and contribute as part of a team. Salary £17,500 per annum.

For application form contact: **Mary Ann Tyrrell, Spinal Injuries Association, Newpoint House, 76 St James's Lane, Muswell Hill, London N10 3DF. Tel: 0181 444 2121.**

Closing date for completed applications: **12th February 1996.**
Interviews planned for 20th February 1996.

SIA's offices are fully wheelchair accessible, and applications from disabled people are particularly welcome.

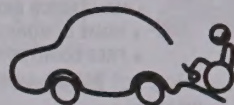
Registered Charity Number 267935.



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Personal



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Disabled accountant works from home and prepares accounts for self-employed people and small businesses for taxation purposes. Can obtain tax rebates if applicable. Fees reasonable. Consultations are free. Tel: 01279 415 664

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Specialising in • Alterations & adaptations for disabled people • Wheel in showers, ramps, extensions etc. For mo.e information or a free quotation call 0161 794 4208.

Property for sale

GLOUCESTER FOUR BEDROOM house. Recently adapted for wheelchair user including lift, ramps to front and rear entrances, electrical points to wheelchair height, lovely rear garden, excellent local amenities. £40,000. Tel: 0181-462 2537.

ONE BEDROOM FLAT on the ground floor of a disabled housing trust establishment near Eastbourne. The site has 24 hour care staff, communal lounge and bar and meals available. The flat is large enough for someone to share. £48,500. Tel: (01323) 811297.

LARGE ONE BEDROOM ground floor flat in Doncaster. Own garden. Private parking. All adapted for disabled or able bodied. Pleasant village location with easy access to A1 and M18 motorways. £28,000. Centrally heated. Tel: (01302) 781536.

Recruitment

WEST OF ENGLAND CENTRE FOR INTEGRATED LIVING (WECIL)

requires a

Disabled Person

as a

DISABILITY ADVICE CENTRE CO-ORDINATOR

(Full time)

Salary £18,189-£19,260 per annum

The post is based in South Bristol and involves managing a busy advice centre.

For details and an application pack please contact:

**Terri Roberts, WECIL Ltd, Leinster
Avenue, Knowle, Bristol BS4 1AR**

Telephone: 0117 9839839 (Voice and Minicom)

Closing date: Friday 8th March 1996

WECIL is an equal opportunities employer and particularly welcomes applications from Black Disabled people who are under-represented in the workforce.



**Hertfordshire
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Where your ability counts
not your disability.

FIRE CONTROL OPERATOR

Fire and Rescue Service

Command and Control Centre (Stevenage)

£11,229 - £16,398 p.a.

(depending on age and length of service)

If you are interested in making a real contribution to the valuable work of the emergency services without being physically on the "front-line", then this might be the career for you.

Our Command and Control Centre began operating in its new purpose built accommodation in 1994. All the County's fire and emergency calls are received at the Centre and small teams of highly trained Fire Control Operators are responsible for mobilising fire engines, specialist equipment and Officers to fires, road accidents and other incidents. The work is demanding and there is no room for error, team working is important and you must be able to maintain your calm when the pressure is on.

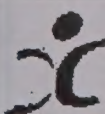
Fire Control Operators work a 12 hour rotating shift system (0800 - 2000 hrs and 2000 - 0800 hrs) averaging over a 42 hr week. The training you will receive will be comprehensive and assumes no prior working experience in the emergency services. All you need to convince us of is your commitment, ability to learn, sound keyboarding skills, accurate listening and oral communication skills and unflappable common-sense. If you feel you have these qualities then we would like to hear from you.

The Command and Control Centre is situated all on one level and provides a pleasant, air conditioned working environment with good wheelchair access.

Interested? For an application for and further details, please contact:
The Receptionist, Service headquarters, Old London Road, Hertford, Herts.
Tel: (01992) 507507. Please quote ref: 2/96. Closing date: 10.00 am, 4.3.96.

We are positive about disabled people and therefore applicants with a disability will be guaranteed an interview if they meet the essential shortlisting criteria for this post.

An Equal Opportunity Employer



Imperial Cancer Research Fund

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- ★ Homebased, part-time, flexible hours
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You will need a good telephone manner, neat handwriting and a sense of humour! For more information and details of where the vacancies are please send s.a.e. to: Collections Manager, Darley Covert, Church Lane, Darley Abbey, Derby DE3 1EX.

Registered Charity No. 209631

GREATER LONDON ASSOCIATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE

GLAD is London's leading disability organisation.

We need an

INFORMATION OFFICER

- ★ To produce our regular bulletin "Disability Update" and our highly regarded "London Disability Guide"
- ★ To maintain our extensive information resource and to answer queries by telephone and by letter.

You need to have

- ★ a knowledge of disability issues
- ★ good computer skills (word processing and data base use essential; desk top publishing an advantage)
- ★ ability to write clearly, accurately and fast
- ★ knowledge of information systems (experience of information or advice work preferable)
- ★ commitment to equal opportunities.

Salary: NJC Scale 6.26 £17,154-£18,153 (including Inner London Weighting).

Closing date: 23rd February 1996.

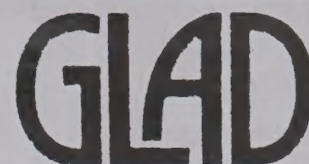
GLAD's offices are fully accessible.

For further details and application form contact

**GLAD, 336 Brixton Road, London SW9
7AA. Telephone/Minicom 0171 274 0107.
Fax 0171 274 7840**

GLAD is an equal opportunities employer.

Registered under the Charities Act No. 293158



FUNDED BY



Production Training Scheme

Community & Disability Programmes Disability Programmes Unit

Alongside our programme making activities the Disability Programmes Unit runs a training scheme which aims to bring more disabled people into television.

We are looking for 2 Production Trainees to join us in 1996. Traineeships will be for 2 years with time spent in the unit and on placement to other programme making areas.

To be considered for these traineeships you must have a perspective on life gained through your experience as a disabled person, a burning desire to make television programmes with evidence of a real commitment to working in this exciting and demanding area, creative flair, a broad educational background demonstrated either by formal qualification, private study or self education, a wide knowledge of and critical interest in the television output of the BBC including Disability Programmes Unit, a knowledge of current disability issues and general news and events.

The training salary is £15,336 p.a. rising to £15,877 p.a. after one year (subject to satisfactory progress) plus an allowance of £1685 p.a. to compensate for working unpredictable hours. Based West London.

For a special application form and information pack send a postcard (quote ref. 20878/DI) to BBC Recruitment Services, PO Box 7000, London W5 2WY. Tel: 0181-849 0849 Minicom 0181-231 9231 by February 23rd.

If you require this material in any format other than standard print please telephone William Davidson Access Manager DPU on 0181-752 5016 (voice or minicom).

Application forms to be returned by February 29th.

WORKING FOR EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

ROCHDALE COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Graphics/Technical Support Officer

Floor 7, Telegraph House, Baillie Street, Rochdale
Job Ref 36

Career Grade Scale 1-6, appointment to be at Scale 5/6 £13,197-£15,942.
36 1/4 hours per week, Monday to Friday.

We have a vacancy for a Graphic Designer in the Central Graphics Unit, which provides a full graphic design service to all Council Departments.

You must be able to interpret a wide range of client briefs and develop the brief through to its final conclusion working under minimum supervision. You will undertake all elements of design work, including promotional literature, logos and letterheads, exhibitions, reports etc. Excellent design skills and a high standard of literacy and communication skills are essential.

Applicants should possess an HNC qualification or equivalent or 5 years minimum experience.

Interviews likely to be held week commencing 11 March 1996.

The successful applicant will be expected to undertake a certain amount of travelling in the execution of his/her duties for which a casual user car allowance (or other reimbursement) will be provided.

Your application will be judged solely on its merits. Any registered disabled person meeting the essential criteria for the post will be guaranteed an interview. All full-time posts unless otherwise stated are suitable for job-sharing and applications are invited from individuals with or without a job-share partner. The Council operates a no-smoking policy in indoor working areas.



For an application form and job description please call in or write (quoting job ref 36) to The Information Centre, Floor 2, Municipal Offices, Smith Street, Rochdale, OL16 1YA. Tel (01706) 865634 (answering machine outside office hours). Alternatively, requests can be made by deaf and hearing-impaired people with a minicom system on (01706) 864404 during office hours. Completed applications should be returned no later than 14 February 1996.

STRIVING FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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Yoga taught by Foundation teachers a part of each course.

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All aspects of running your own business are taught as an integral part of both courses.

Book now on 01767-627271!



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DisabilityNow

The award winning newspaper for everyone with an interest in disability

£1.40 February 1996

Features

PARENT'S VOICE

Peto pioneer fights for a decent wheelchair



MOTORING HOLIDAYS

— and win a 'fantastic' fishing trip to Scotland



RELATIONSHIPS

Mating, marriage and life in the House of Cyn



Care in crisis

Cash-strapped councils are being forced to make more cuts in community care services, causing misery to thousands of people. Full story overleaf.

Jeff Edwards, who has multiple sclerosis, is the first student to get a Masters Degree in Disability Studies from Leeds University, the only UK university offering the course.



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